

A SECOND TREASURY OF THE WORLD'S GREAT LETTERS

A Mixed Mailbag INCLUDING INTIMATE EXCHANGES AND CYCLES
OF CORRESPONDENCE BY FAMED MEN AND WOMEN OF HISTORY
AND THE ARTS, ELECTED, EDITED, INTEGRATED, WITH HISTORICAL
SETTINGS AND BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUNDS AND CONSEQUENCES,
BY WALLACE BROCKWAY & BART KEITH WINE
TOGETHER WITH A PREFATORY NOTE BY *M. Lincoln Schuster*



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In Praise of Letters

Letters, such as written by wise men, are, of all the words of men, in my judgment, the best.

FRANCIS BACON

A single paragraph in an impulsive letter will often tell more about a man than a whole work calculated by him to the same ostensible end. . . .

GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

A man's letters are only the mirror of his heart. Whatever passes within him is there shown undisguised in its natural progress; nothing is invented, nothing distorted; you see systems in their elements, you discover actions in their motives. . . . Is it not my soul laid open before you in these veracious pages? Do you not see me reduced to first principles? This is the pleasure of corresponding with a friend, where doubt and distrust have no place, and everything is said as it is thought.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

The chief interest of a study of the great letter writers is that it introduces us not to literary works, but to persons. This is the triumph of letter-writing, that it keeps a more delicate image alive and presents us with a subtler likeness of the writer than we can find in the more formal achievements of authorship.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

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Foreword

WHEN a publisher issues the second or companion volume in a series, or places his imprint upon the sequel, it is incumbent upon him to announce that he is doing so in response to *insistent, sometimes even clamorous, public demand*. That is the hallowed procedure in the folkways of publishing.

In the case of *A Second Treasury of the World's Great Letters* the publisher finds himself in the embarrassing and doubtless highly unconstitutional position of being in "double jeopardy". He not only edited the first *Treasury of the World's Great Letters*—but compounded the felony by helping his partner to publish it. As the original perpetrator, it behooves him, therefore, to be duly diffident, modest, and shy; as an accomplice and accessory after the crime, he happens to know all the facts. His left hand has kept his right hand fully informed.

The plain truth of the matter is that this second anthology of the world's notable correspondence was instigated originally by the editor of the first volume, ratified by the selfsame publisher and his colleagues, and aided and abetted by those readers and reviewers who served as volunteer back-seat letter carriers without portfolio.

When, within a few months after publication, the first volume reached more than three hundred thousand readers (thanks to the booksellers of America and the Book of the Month Club and to having the right publisher) the editor found himself deluged—well, at least, refreshingly sprinkled and bespattered—with free-lance suggestions, both amateur and professional, ranging from over-generous reviews and grateful fan letters to outraged complaints and vituperous demands.

Why was the correspondence of Cicero and Cæsar left out? Why were Petrarch and Machiavelli completely omitted? Why only two letters of Samuel Johnson? Why so many love letters of Napoleon? Why Mencken and not Carlyle? Why not Katherine Mansfield? What a high crime

FOREWORD

and misdemeanour to dare call it "an anthology of the world's great letters" without a line from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Horace Walpole, Edward FitzGerald, Charles Lamb, William Cowper, Thomas Gray, and Jonathan Swift!

To meet this mail-box mutiny is the primary purpose of the Second Treasury of the World's Great Letters.

In the first volume, the accent was largely on the great men, the great events, and the great ideas of history, from Alexander the Great and Paul the Apostle to George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Mann; and the private and secret communications shedding the most revealing—and sometimes the most surprising and shocking—light upon them.

This time, in the hands of my learned and indefatigable editorial colleagues, Wallace Brockway and Bart Keith Winer, the emphasis is rather on the more literary, the more leisurely letters, and frankly on the letters of the best writers. This sequel, like the first book, gives us many "monuments of the moment"—letters about the turning points of history, letters catastrophic and crucial, letters passionate and tumultuous, but to a far greater extent it stresses the correspondence and interchanges of intimate companionship and relaxed gossip, letters of satire and irony, letters of friendship and appreciation, letters of easy graces and shop talk about poetry, philosophy, and literature.

Being themselves men of letters, Messrs. Brockway and Winer have with great delight and scholarly documentation made the startling discovery that most of the best letters, from ancient days to our own time, have actually been written by professional writers. After all, the original name for literature was "letters", and, as Christopher Morley has pointed out, letters are the world's unwritten sonnets.

In these pages, then, we find the sovereigns of the arts and sciences speaking their minds, not merely as geniuses, but as men and women. The eternal joy of eavesdropping is thus enhanced for those of us who revel in reading other people's mail.

Again, both sides of the correspondence are given; again, the letters are not presented in a vacuum. Through biographical, critical, and historical prologues and aftermaths for each letter or cycle of correspondence, the editors—this time, with far greater erudition—achieve an amalgam of "life and letters".

FOREWORD

Some of the people in the first volume are found here once more—perhaps in a different mood. But there is a host of new characters—and a teeming abundance of their letters, old and new, letters again testifying to the unquenchable spirit of man, letters from the heart to the heart, letters once personal but now no longer confidential, letters which in their totality form a secret diary of the human race, an unlocked casebook of human motives and aspirations. . . .

At the Inner Sanctum the postman always rings twice.

M. LINCOLN SCHUSTER

Part One

LETTERS OF LONG AGO

[FROM 49 B.C. TO A.D. 1670]

CICERO AND CÆSAR: A FATAL FRIENDSHIP

[A SERIES OF LETTERS]

THE great name of Gaius Julius Cæsar is easily the first in the annals of the Roman Republic. Apparently the champion of newly aroused democratic forces, Cæsar, moving audaciously from one transitional stage to another, was in the midst of such bold designs at the time of his death that his ultimate aims are still the subject of fierce debate by historians.

One thing is certain, however: Cæsar had no intention of preserving that oligarchy of self-seekers which went under the name of the Roman Republic. Most of his opponents knew that one fact, even if they varied widely among themselves as to his ultimate aims. The Senate was the bulwark of the Republic, and as Cæsar's power increased, the Senate noted its own prestige decreasing. A generation or two before, when similar dangers threatened its supremacy, the Senate had found a ruthless champion in Sulla. But Cæsar was another matter: the Senate raised their strong men against him, and they all turned out to be men of straw.

Marcus Tullius Cicero was certainly not without ambition, but he was best constituted to remain a bystander during the struggle between Cæsar and the Senate. Yet, even an innocent bystander (which Cicero never could have been) occasionally got hit by a stray javelin, and by entering into the fray Cicero managed to imagine himself a far more

important political force than he ever was. In the days before Cæsar had become the biggest man in Italy, Cicero had been saluted, after his speeches against Catiline, as Father of the Fatherland. A Cato—a republican exemplifying the oldest traditions of the republicans—had conferred the title upon him, and Cicero did not quickly forget the heart-swelling incident.

CICERO TREMBLES FOR HIS LIFE, BUT IS SUSTAINED
BY THE PURITY OF HIS CONSCIENCE

[A LETTER TO HIS FRIEND ATTICUS]

CICERO'S correspondence with Titus Pomponius Atticus, a Roman business man with antiquarian and literary leanings, is remarkable for its candour and utter lack of reserve. Beginning in 68 B.C., when Cicero was a candidate for the praetorship, it continued for a quarter of a century, breaking off about a year before his death. Carrying the writer through varying fortunes and exhibiting every trait of his far from admirable, but thoroughly human, character, the letters to Atticus form the bulkiest part of the vast correspondence he maintained with many of his contemporaries.

Cicero was not without political insight, but he acted his own political rôle clumsily. He realised this fact, and in one letter refers to himself as "a regular ass". Yet, he was not wholly to blame. An upstart from a provincial town, a mere knight's son (what the Romans called a *novus homo*), finally, a lawyer with the most lucrative practice in Rome, Cicero reached the consulship through his great gifts as an orator. This was the period of his magnificent speeches against Catiline. He triumphed, incidentally discomfiting Cæsar, then rising into power. But Cæsar held no grudge: rather, he recognised Cicero's ability to such an extent that in 60, when he joined forces with Pompey the Great and the millionaire Crassus, he offered to Cicero a partnership in the ruling of the the Roman world. As J. Wight Duff has put it: "The collaboration of a constitutional lawyer so plausible in oratory would have been manifest gain."

Cicero refused to be wooed into anything so unconstitutional. The knight's son preferred to remain a loyal oligarch of the dying Roman Republic. Outwardly friendly to Cæsar, he preferred the weak and

flighty Pompey, who would, he thought, preserve power for the Senate. Always nervously, sometimes hysterically, Cicero wrung his hands over the evil days. In 49, after Pompey had fled to Greece before Cæsar's advancing legions, Cicero—an avowed follower of Pompey by this time—was put squarely on the spot. Dolabella, his profligate son-in-law, and his nephew Quintus were both Cæsareans, the latter having switched his allegiance when he saw that Pompey's was almost certain to be the losing side.

For a time, Cicero was in despair, not even sure that his life was safe. In a letter charged with nervous emotion, he poured out his doubts and fears to his philosophical friend:

“ . . . Cæsar must be very fond of me.”

Cumae, April 14 [49 B.C.]

I HAVE received a large number of letters from you on the same day, all carefully written; one, however, which amounts to a volume, deserving to be read again and again, as I am doing. The labour of writing it was not thrown away, and I am excessively obliged to you. Wherefore, as long as circumstances allow of it, that is, as long as you know where I am, I earnestly beg of you to repeat the experiment as often as possible. Yes, indeed: let there be once for all an end, if possible, to these daily lamentations, or at any rate some sort of restraint in them, which at least is possible. For it is not now the rank, the honours, or the position in life which I have lost that I am thinking of, but what I have actually attained to, the services I have performed, the reputation in which I have lived: in fine, the difference, even in these disastrous circumstances, between myself and those through whom I have lost all. These are the men who thought that, without expelling

me from the state, they could not maintain the free gratification of their desires; and you see to what this close alliance and unprincipled coalition of theirs have come!

The one leader is in a fever of mad fury and crime: there is no slackening with him—his hand grows heavier every day. Not long ago he expelled Pompey from Italy. Now on one side of the empire he is for pursuing him, on the other for stripping him of his province. He no longer refuses, he even in a sense demands, to have the title of tyrant, as he already is one in fact. The other—the man who once upon a time did not so much as raise me up when I threw myself at his feet—the man who said he could do nothing against Cæsar's wish—having evaded the hand and sword of his father-in-law, is now preparing war by land and sea: not an unjust one on his part indeed, but both righteous and even necessary, but yet one fatal to his fellow citizens unless he prove victorious, fraught with disaster even if he is victorious.

Not only do I not rate the achievements of these supreme commanders as superior to my own: I do not even consider that their present position is any better, though they seem to be in a very brilliant one, and I to be struggling with a harder fate. For who can be happy who has caused either the abandonment or the invasion of his country? And if, as you remind me, I was right in saying in these books that the only good was virtue, the only evil vice, certainly both those men are in the highest degree miserable, for to both the safety and dignity of their country have always been subordinate to their own power and their private advantage. I am therefore sustained by the purity of my conscience, when I reflect that I either performed the most eminent services to the state, when I had the power, or at least never harboured any but loyal thoughts; and that the Republic has been wrecked by precisely the storm which I foresaw fourteen years ago.

With such feelings, then, as my companions, shall I set out, not indeed without a bitter pang, and that, not so much for my own or my brother's sake (for our life is practically over) as for our sons, for whom at times it seems to me that we were bound to have secured, among other things, the integrity of the con-

stitution. Of them the one, because he is not after all more dutiful than he is, gives me extraordinary pain: while the other—Oh dear! Oh dear! it is the keenest sorrow of my life—corrupted no doubt by our system of indulgence, has gone very far, to a point indeed which I do not venture to describe.

I am expecting, too, a letter from you: for you said that you would write at greater length when you had seen the young man himself. All my indulgent conduct to him has been accompanied with considerable strictness, and it is not one only or a small peccadillo of his that I have come down upon, but many and very serious ones; his father's gentleness to him also ought to have secured his affection, rather than such unfeeling disrespect. The fact is that his writing to Cæsar caused us such serious annoyance that, while we concealed it from you, we yet, I think, made his own life unpleasant. This recent journey of his, however, and his pretence of loyalty to us I do not venture to characterise. I only know that after visiting Hirtius he was invited to an interview by Cæsar, that he talked to him about my feeling as being entirely opposed to his own views, and of my design of quitting Italy. Even this I do not write with confidence. Well, it is not my fault, it is his natural disposition that must cause us alarm. It was this that corrupted Curio and the son of Hortensius, not their fathers' fault. My brother is prostrate with grief, and is not so much afraid for his own life as for mine.

To this misery pray, pray, bring any consolations that you can; above all I should prefer one—the assurance that the story told us is false or exaggerated. If it is true, I don't see what is to happen in our present state of life, when we are practically exiles. For if the Republic had still had any existence, I should have been at no loss what to do either by way of severity or indulgence. Whether it is the influence of anger, or pain, or fear, I have written this in a tone of greater severity than either your affection for him or mine would seem to warrant. If it is true, you must pardon me: if false, I shall be only too glad to be relieved of my mistake by you. But whatever the truth of the matter may be, you must not attribute any blame to his uncle or father.

I had written so far when a message was brought from Curio's house that he was coming to call on me. He had arrived at his Cumæan villa yesterday, that is, the 13th. If his conversation, therefore, furnishes me with any subject worth writing to you, I will append it to this letter.

Curio passed by my villa and sent me a message to say that he was coming presently, and hurried on to Puteoli to make a public speech there. He made his speech, returned, and paid me a very long visit. Monstrous! You know our friend: he made no concealments. To begin with, he said that it was absolutely certain that all who had been condemned under the *lex Pompeia* were being recalled, and that accordingly he would avail himself of their services in Sicily. As to the Spains, he had no doubt about their being Cæsar's; and from them Cæsar would himself march with an army wherever Pompey was: that an end would be put to the whole mischief by the latter's death: that in an access of anger Cæsar had really wished the tribune Metellus to be killed, and that it was within an ace of being done: if it had been done, there would have followed a serious massacre: that a great many people advised one: that Cæsar himself was not by taste or nature averse from bloodshed, but thought clemency would win him popularity: if, however, he once lost his affection of the people, he would be cruel: he was, again, much disturbed by finding that he had caused ill-feeling among the populace itself by taking the treasury, and therefore that, though he had quite made up his mind to address the people before leaving Rome, he had not ventured to do so, and had started with very disturbed feelings.

When again I asked what he saw in the future, what final result, and what sort of constitution, he openly confessed that there was no hope left. He expressed fear of Pompey's fleet, and said that, if it put out to sea, he should abandon Sicily. "What is the meaning of your lictors?" said I. "If derived from the Senate, why laurelled? If from Cæsar, why six?" "I wanted," said he, "to get my authority from a decree of the Senate, though by a snatch vote, for it could not be done otherwise. But Cæsar now dislikes the Senate much more than ever. 'Everything,' he says, 'will in future come from

me.' " "But why six?" "Because I did not want twelve; I might have had them."

Then I said, "How I wish I had asked him for what I hear Philippus has succeeded in getting! But I was afraid to ask, as I had made no concession to him." "He would have gladly given you leave," said he: "indeed, consider that you have obtained it; for I will write and tell him, exactly as you like, that we have spoken on the subject. What does it matter to him, since you do not attend the Senate, where you are? Nay, at this very moment you would have not damaged his cause in the least by having quitted Italy."

In answer to this I said that I was looking out for some retired and solitary spot, chiefly because I still had lictors. He commended my design. "What do you say to this, then?" said I. "My course to Greece lies through your province, since the coast of the Mare Superum is guarded by troops." "Nothing I should like better," said he. On this subject he spoke at great length and in a very courteous tone. So then I have gained this much, that I can sail not only in safety, but even without concealment. All other subjects of discussion he put off till the next day; and, if any of them seem worth a letter, I will write and tell you.

But there are some things which I omitted to ask him: whether Cæsar intended to wait for an interregnum, or what he meant by saying, as he did, that he was offered the consulship, but refused it for the next year. And there are other points on which I will question him. To crown all he swore—as he usually makes no difficulty of doing—that Cæsar must be very fond of me. "Why, what," continued he, "did Dolabella write to me?" "Pray tell me what." He then declared that Dolabella had written to say that, for having desired me to come to the city, Cæsar had thanked him warmly, and not only expressed approbation, but joy.

In short, I was relieved. For the suspicion of domestic treachery and of the conversation with Hirtius was removed. How I long for young Quintus to be worthy of us, and how I encourage myself to believe what is in his favour! But need he have visited Hirtius? There is, no doubt, some motive or other; but I would

wish it as slight as possible. And, after all, I am surprised at his not yet having returned. But we shall see about all this.

Please put the Oppii [moneylenders] at Terentia's [Cicero's wife] service. For this is the only danger in the city now. For myself, however, give me the benefit of your advice, as to whether I should go to Rhegium by land, or start straight from this place on board ship, and on other points; for I am still staying here. I shall have something to write about to you as soon as I have seen Curio again. Pray be as careful as ever to let me know how Tiro [Cicero's favourite freedman] is.

CÆSAR WARNS CICERO TO STAND ALOOF FROM
CIVIL STRIFE

TWO days after his letter to Atticus, Cicero received a terse but friendly note from Cæsar. It guaranteed his safety but warned him against interfering in the struggle.:

“ . . . what can be more becoming to a good man . . . ”

On the Road to Spain, April 16 [49 B.C.]

CÆSAR IMPERATOR GREETES CICERO IMPERATOR.

Although I had come to the conclusion that you were not likely to do anything unadvisedly or imprudently, yet, being made anxious by common report, I thought that I ought to write to you and to appeal to you, in the name of our mutual kindness, not to go anywhere now that fortune has declared in my favour, that you had not thought yourself bound to go even when it was still uncertain. For you will have at once committed a somewhat serious offence against our friendship, and have adopted a course far from beneficial to yourself: since you will make it clear that you have not followed fortune—for all the good luck has notoriously been on our side, all the bad on theirs—nor the merits of the cause, for they are the same now as when you judged it best not to assist at their deliberations: but you will show that you have condemned some act of mine, and that is the heaviest blow you can inflict on me. In the name of our friendship, I beg you not to do so.

Finally, what can be more becoming to a good man, and a peaceable and quiet citizen, than to hold aloof from civil strife? It is a

thing some would have been glad to do, but could not on account of the danger. For yourself, when you have satisfied yourself as to the evidence which my life furnishes, and the decision at which my friendship for you has arrived, you will find nothing at once safer and more honourable than to abstain entirely from active intervention in the fray.

ALTHOUGH Cicero had by this time concluded that there was little to choose between the Pompeians and the Cæsareans, Cæsar's assurance of friendship and counsel of prudence could not quite tip the scale against his rather sentimental loyalty to Pompey. Cæsar's letter gave him an excuse for going into retirement without losing face, and he wrote wistfully of the possibility. He shilly-shallied for several months, keeping up a petulant correspondence with leaders on both sides, until news came that Cæsar, who was engaged against Pompey's lieutenants in Spain, was in a dangerous position. At this point he decided that he could safely join his hero in Greece. Not unnaturally, the late-comer was greeted somewhat coldly. Cæsar soon retrieved his fortunes in Spain, crossed over to Greece early in 48, and in August defeated Pompey in the decisive battle of Pharsalus.

Again, Cicero had taken the wrong turning. He could scarcely hope for magnanimity from Cæsar, but his luck held. He was allowed to leave Greece after the rout of the Pompeians, and his semi-exile in southern Italy was monotonous but safe. When Cæsar embarked at Tarentum in September, 47, Cicero went trembling to greet him. Flushed with the triumphs of his Asiatic wars, Cæsar could afford to be generous to the broken old man. Alighting from his carriage, he embraced Cicero, spoke long and affectionately with him, and invited him to resume his old way of life.

CICERO ENTERTAINS A FORMIDABLE GUEST

[A LETTER TO HIS FRIEND ATTICUS]

UNTIL Cæsar's death, less than three years after his return to Italy, Cicero lived the life of a country gentleman, dividing his time between literature, philosophy, and the writing of letters. His political influence was gone, and he had to content himself with pleading the cause of the exiled Pompeians. His public references to Cæsar are models of fulsome hypocrisy—only a god could have merited such compliments. The social amenities were preserved between the two men, and less than three months before the dire Ides of March Cicero entertained Cæsar at his splendid villa at Puteoli :

“Once is enough.”

Puteoli, December 21 [44 B.C.]

WELL, I have no reason after all to repent my formidable guest! For he made himself exceedingly pleasant. But on his arrival at the villa of Philippus on the evening of the second day of the Saturnalia, the villa was so choke full of soldiers that there was scarcely a dining-room left for Cæsar himself to dine in. Two thousand men, if you please! I was in a great taking as to what was to happen the next day; and so Cassius Barba came to my aid and gave me guards. A camp was pitched in the open, the villa was put

in a state of defence. He stayed with Philippus on the third day of the Saturnalia till one o'clock, without admitting anyone. He was engaged on his accounts, I think, with Balbus. Then he took a walk on the beach. After two he went to the bath. Then he heard about Mamurra without changing countenance. He was anointed: took his place at the table. He was under a course of emetics, and so ate and drank without scruple and as suited his taste. It was a very good dinner, and well served, and not only so, but

*Well-cooked, well-seasoned food, with rare discourse:
A banquet in a word to cheer the heart.*

Besides this, the staff were entertained in three rooms in a very liberal style. The freedom of lower rank and the slaves had everything they could want. But the upper sort had a really *recherché* dinner. In fact, I showed that I was somebody. However, he is not a guest to whom one would say, "Pray look me up again on your way back." Once is enough. We didn't say a word about politics. There was plenty of literary talk. In short, he was pleased and enjoyed himself. He said he should stay one day at Puteoli, another at Baiae. That's the story of the entertainment, or I might call it the billeting on me—trying to the temper, but not seriously inconvenient. I am staying on here for a short time and then go to Tusculum. When he was passing Dolabella's villa, the whole guard formed up on the right and left of his horse, and nowhere else. This I was told by Nicias.

ON MARCH 15, 44 B.C., *Cæsar was assassinated by a cabal of republican nobles, his body pierced by twenty-three dagger wounds. Cicero was not present nor was he actually implicated in it. Yet, as Spengler pointed out, on the testimony of Antony, the unworthy heir to Cæsar's policy, Cicero was "the intellectual author of the deed." The parvenu of Arpinum, more than anyone else, had served as the mouthpiece of the club of nobles the Senate had become. He sat at his ease while*

others were dealing the deathblow to Rome's greatest man—sat at his ease and thought his guilty thoughts. No sooner was murder done than he dispatched the following hysterical note to L. Minucius Basilus,* one of the fiercest of the assassins:

I congratulate you! For myself I am rejoiced! I love you! I watch over your interests: I desire to be loved by you and to be informed of how you are, and what is being done.

In the reassembling of forces after Cæsar's death, Cicero came out into the open with a boldness unusual in one so cautious, vacillating, and, on occasions, timid. He spoke frequently against Antony and in favour of Brutus and Cassius, the leaders of the Ides of March conspiracy. He counted on Cæsar's nephew and adopted son Octavian, with whom he was friendly, to side with the Senate and thus check Antony's ambitions. Instead, Octavian joined Antony and Lepidus—a kind of one-man buffer state—in the second triumvirate. Cicero was doomed. Despite Octavian's intercession, he was placed among the proscribed and executed by Antony's hirelings on December 7, 43.

Many years later, Octavian—now become Augustus—found one of his grandchildren surreptitiously reading Cicero. The Great Emperor took up the codex, stood scrutinising it for a long time, and finally handed it back to the trembling lad, saying, "An eloquent man, my boy, an eloquent man, and a lover of his country."

* This ruffian was murdered by his own slaves in revenge for his ferocious punishment of some of them.

SENECA DENOUNCES THE MODERN TREATMENT OF
SLAVES AND URGES A RETURN TO THE HUMANE
WAYS OF THE OLD ROMANS

[A LETTER TO HIS FRIEND LUCILIUS]

HISTORY has not yet made up its mind whether or not Seneca was a scoundrel. That he was a usurer is maintained by the historian Dio Cassius, who bore him no love. Indeed, Dio goes so far as to say that Seneca caused a revolution in Britain when he foreclosed on debts due him, amounting to ten million sesterces. Others hold that when he was tutoring Nero, he allowed the boy to indulge his monstrous appetites without stint.

Seneca's life was a series of triumphs and hairbreadth escapes. Born in Spain, he went to Rome in his youth and became a well-known lawyer and writer. His success aroused the enmity of the jealous Caligula, who called Seneca's writings "mere school exercises". His ill-health saved his life: Caligula was assured that Seneca had not long to live. Under Claudius, he suffered from the hatred of Messalina, the Emperor's wife. Accused of too great an intimacy with a lady of the imperial house, Seneca was banished—at Messalina's request—to Corsica. When Messalina fell and Claudius married Agrippina, Seneca was recalled to Rome to tutor her son Nero. As Suetonius puts it: "They say that on the following night Seneca dreamed that he was teaching Gaius Cæsar [Caligula], and Nero soon proved the dream prophetic by revealing the cruelty of his disposition at the earliest possible opportunity."

Under Nero, Seneca's power and fortune increased at first, then diminished to the vanishing point after he agreed to the death of his benefactress Agrippina. He withdrew to his sumptuous villa and pleaded with Nero to let him retire from public life—that is, to live. With death

stalking him daily, he sat down and wrote, between the years 63 and 65, his famous letters of philosophic calm to Lucilius, an Epicurean philosopher who was procurator of Sicily. The moral Seneca of these letters is the side of his personality we know best today. The correspondence dealt with travel, health, religion, science, death, gladiatorial combats, and, in one of the letters most modern in outlook, slavery :

“His soul . . . may be that of a free man.”

I AM glad to learn, through those who come from you, that you live on friendly terms with your slaves. This befits a sensible and well-educated man like yourself. “They are slaves,” people declare. Nay, rather they are men. “Slaves!” No, comrades. “Slaves!” No, they are unpretentious friends. “Slaves!” No, they are our fellow slaves, if one reflects that Fortune has equal rights over slaves and free men alike.

That is why I smile at those who think it degrading for a man to dine with his slave. But why should they think it degrading? It is only because purse-proud etiquette surrounds a householder at his dinner with a mob of standing slaves. The master eats more than he can hold, and with monstrous greed loads his belly until it is stretched and at length ceases to do the work of a belly; so that he is at greater pains to discharge all the food than he was to stuff it down. All this time the poor slaves may not move their lips, even to speak. The slightest murmur is repressed by the rod; even a chance sound—a cough, a sneeze, or a hiccup—is visited with the lash. There is a grievous penalty for the slightest breach of silence. All night long they must stand about, hungry and dumb.

The result of it all is that these slaves, who may not talk in their master’s presence, talk about their master. But the slaves of

former days, who were permitted to converse not only in their master's presence, but actually with him, whose mouths were not stitched up tight, were ready to bare their necks for their master, to bring upon their own heads any danger that threatened him; they spoke at the feast, but kept silence during torture. Finally, the saying, in allusion to this same high-handed treatment, becomes current: "As many enemies as you have slaves." They are not enemies when we acquire them; we make them enemies.

I shall pass over other cruel and inhuman conduct towards them; for we maltreat them, not as if they were men, but as if they were beasts of burden. When we recline at a banquet, one slave mops up the disgorged food, another crouches beneath the table and gathers up the left-overs of the tipsy guests. Another carves the priceless game birds; with unerring strokes and skilled hand he cuts choice morsels along the breast or the rump. Hapless fellow, to live only for the purpose of cutting fat capons correctly—unless, indeed, the other man is still more unhappy than he, who teaches this art for pleasure's sake, rather than he who learns it because he must. Another, who serves the wine, must dress like a woman and wrestle with his advancing years; he cannot get away from his boyhood; he is dragged back to it; and though he has already acquired a soldier's figure, he is kept beardless by having his hair smoothed away or plucked out by the roots, and he must remain awake throughout the night, dividing his time between his master's drunkenness and his lust; in the chamber he must be a man, at the feast a boy. Another, whose duty it is to put a valuation on the guests, must stick to his task, poor fellow, and watch to see whose flattery and whose immodesty, whether of appetite or of language, is to get them an invitation for tomorrow. Think also of the poor purveyors of food, who note their masters' tastes with delicate skill, who know what special flavours will sharpen their appetite, what will please their eyes, what new combinations will rouse their cloyed stomachs, what food will excite their loathing through sheer satiety, and what will stir them to hunger on that particular day. With slaves like these the master cannot bear to dine; he would think it

beneath his dignity to associate with his slave at the same table! Heaven forbid!

But how many masters is he creating in these very men! I have seen standing in the line, before the door of Callistus, the former master of Callistus; I have seen the master himself shut out while others were welcomed—the master who once fastened the “For Sale” ticket on Callistus and put him in the market along with the good-for-nothing slaves. But he has been paid off by that slave who was shuffled into the first lot of those on whom the crier practises his lungs; the slave, too, in his turn has cut his name from the list and in his turn has adjudged him unfit to enter his house. The master sold Callistus, but how much has Callistus made his master pay for!

Kindly remember that he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives, and dies. It is just as possible for you to see in him a free-born man as for him to see in you a slave. As a result of the massacres in Marius’ day, many a man of distinguished birth, who was taking the first steps towards senatorial rank by service in the army, was humbled by fortune, one becoming a shepherd, another a caretaker of a country cottage. Despise, then, if you dare, those to whose estate you may at any time descend, even when you are despising them.

I do not wish to involve myself in too large a question, and to discuss the treatment of slaves, towards whom we Romans are excessively haughty, cruel, and insulting. But this is the kernel of my advice: treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters. And as often as you reflect how much power you have over a slave, remember that your master has just as much power over you. “But I have no master,” you say. You are still young; perhaps you will have one. Do you not know at what age Hecuba entered captivity, or Croesus, or the mother of Darius, or Plato, or Diogenes?

Associate with your slave on kindly, even on affable, terms; let him talk with you, plan with you, live with you. I know that at this point all the exquisites will cry out against me in a body; they

will say: "There is nothing more debasing, more disgraceful, than this." But these are the very persons whom I sometimes surprise kissing the hands of other men's slaves. Do you not see even this—how our ancestors removed from masters everything invidious, and from slaves everything insulting? They called the master "father of the household", and the slaves "members of the household", a custom which still holds in the mime. They established a holiday on which masters and slaves should eat together—not as the only day for this custom, but as obligatory on that day in any case. They allowed the slaves to attain honours in the household and to pronounce judgment; they held that a household was a miniature commonwealth.

"Do you mean to say," comes the retort, "that I must seat all my slaves at my own table?" No, not any more than that you should invite all free men to it. You are mistaken if you think that I would bar from my table certain slaves whose duties are more humble, as, for example, yonder muleteer or yonder herdsman; I propose to value them according to their character, and not according to their duties. Each man acquires his character for himself, but accident assigns his duties. Invite some to your table because they deserve the honour, and others that they may come to deserve it. For if there is any slavish quality in them as the result of their low associations, it will be shaken off by intercourse with men of gentler breeding. You need not, my dear Lucilius, hunt for friends in the forum or in the Senate House; if you are careful and attentive, you will find them at home also. Good material often stands idle for want of an artist; make the experiment, and you will find it so. As he is a fool who, when purchasing a horse, does not consider the animal's points, but merely his saddle and bridle; so he is doubly a fool who values a man from his clothes or from his rank, which indeed is only a robe that clothes us.

"He is a slave." His soul, however, may be that of a free man. "He is a slave." But shall that stand in his way? Show me a man who is not a slave; one is a slave to lust, another to greed, another to ambition, and all men are slaves to fear. I will name you an ex-consul who is slave to an old hag, a millionaire who is slave to

a serving maid; I will show you youths of the noblest birth in serfdom to pantomime players! No servitude is more disgraceful than that which is self-imposed.

You should therefore not be deterred by these finicky persons from showing yourself to your slaves as an affable person and not proudly superior to them; they ought to respect you rather than fear you. Some may maintain that I am now offering the liberty cap to slaves in general and toppling down lords from their high estate, because I bid slaves respect their masters instead of fearing them. They say: "This is what he plainly means: slaves are to pay respects as if they were clients or early-morning callers!" Anyone who holds this opinion forgets that what is enough for a god cannot be too little for a master. Respect means love, and love and fear cannot be mingled. So I hold that you are entirely right in not wishing to be feared by your slaves, and in lashing them merely with the tongue; only dumb animals need the thong.

That which annoys us does not necessarily injure us; but we are driven into wild rage by our luxurious lives, so that whatever does not answer our whims arouses our anger. We don the temper of kings. For they, too, forgetful alike of their own strength and of other men's weakness, grow white-hot with rage, as if they had received an injury, when they are entirely protected from danger of such injury by their exalted station. They are not unaware that this is true, but by finding fault they seize upon opportunities to do harm; they insist that they have received injuries, in order that they may inflict them.

I do not wish to delay you longer; for you need no exhortation. This, among other things, is a mark of good character: it forms its own judgments and abides by them; but badness is fickle and frequently changing, not for the better, but for something different. Farewell.

SENECA lost his hold on Nero, but not on the world. Saint Jerome put him on the list of "church writers" (Seneca's brother Gallio, incidentally, is mentioned in the New Testament), and his *Quaestiones*

naturales was a sourcebook for medieval scientists. His tragedies—undramatic strings of declamations—became models for early English and Elizabethan dramas. F. L. Lucas has said: “His work is little remembered, still less regarded now. But if you seek his memorial, look round on the tragic stage of England, France, and Italy.”

In 65, what Seneca had so long dreaded came to pass: Nero demanded his suicide. In Tacitus' words: “Seneca, undismayed, called for tablets to make his will; and, as this was prohibited by the centurion, turning to his friends he told them that since he was debarred from requiting their services, he bequeathed them that which alone was now left him, but which yet was the fairest legacy he had to leave them—the example of his life: and if they kept it in view, they would reap the fame due to honourable acquirements and inviolable friendship. At the same time he endeavoured to repress their tears and restore their fortitude, now by soothing language, now in a more animated strain. . . . For who was unapprised of the ferocious disposition of Nero? Nor could anything else be expected after he had murdered his mother and brother than that he should proceed to destroy his nursing father and preceptor.”

THE YOUNGER PLINY DESCRIBES THE DEATH OF HIS UNCLE DURING AN ERUPTION OF VESUVIUS

[A LETTER TO TACITUS]

PLINY the Younger, like Cicero, was a lawyer, man of letters, and country squire. Like him, he wrote many, if not most, of his letters with an eye to publication. Some of them may never have been sent: they are "set pieces" written to carefully chosen themes. In this way he managed to present a wonderfully detailed picture of the varied life of a Roman gentleman of cultivated mind and inexhaustible means. Appearing in the law courts only when retained in a case that combined tremendous fees with opportunities for interminable oratory, Pliny spent most of his time moving from one to another of his luxurious country houses. Like the poet Gray, sixteen hundred years later, he was essentially a fastidious recluse, a devotee of urbane rusticity, and a follower—at a decorous interval—of the Muses. His friends were few and select, among them Tacitus, Martial, and Suetonius. Yet, Pliny was no escapist—no sought-after lawyer, however choosy, could well be—and his letters from Rome are animated enough. He even followed politics in the cautious style of a person who wants neither to excite jealousy nor to have his leisure too much disturbed.

When Tacitus was collecting the materials for his Histories, he doubtless discussed the task with his friend Pliny. It is easy to imagine the talk turning to the great eruption of Vesuvius, in A.D. 79, which practically ushered in the eventful reign of Titus. Not only did Pliny witness some phases of the eruption, but his uncle and adoptive father Pliny the Elder was suffocated fatally by the fumes from the volcano. As Pliny the Elder had written singlehandedly, in his *Naturalis Historia*, an encyclopædia of universal knowledge, it was not unnatural that Tacitus

would want the full story for his *Histories* or that Pliny the Younger would be eager to furnish it for him.

This faultless piece of narrative prose is one of the finest letters of antiquity, worthy to be received by the great historian whose style Pliny so much admired. Its intimate directness, unretarded motion, eye-witness plausibility, and subtle communication of terror make this story of the old antiquarian's death in the cataclysm that buried Pompeii and Herculaneum a model of everything that the reporting of news ideally can be:

“ . . . he steered his direct course to the point of
danger . . . ”

[c. A.D. 100]

YOUR request that I should send you an account of my uncle's end, in order to transmit a more exact relation of it to posterity, deserves my acknowledgments; for if his death shall be celebrated by your pen, the glory of it, I am well aware, will be rendered forever deathless. And notwithstanding that he perished as did whole peoples and cities in the destruction of a most beautiful region by a misfortune memorable enough to promise him a kind of immortality; notwithstanding he has himself composed many and lasting works; yet I am persuaded the mentioning of him in your immortal writings will greatly contribute to eternise his name. Happy I esteem those whom Providence has distinguished with the ability to do things worthy of being written or to write things worthy to be read; but most happy are they who are blessed with both these uncommon talents, in which latter class my uncle will be placed both by his own writings and by yours. It is with extreme willingness, therefore, I execute, nay, solicit the task you set me.

He was at that time with the fleet under his command at Misenum. On the twenty-fourth of August, about one in the afternoon, my mother desired him to observe a cloud which appeared to be of very unusual size and appearance. He had just been sunning himself, then taken a cold bath, and after a leisurely luncheon had retired to his study. He immediately called for his shoes and went up an eminence from whence he might more distinctly view this very uncommon sight. It was not at that distance discernible from what mountain this cloud issued, but it was found afterwards to be Vesuvius. I cannot give you a more exact description of its shape than by likening it to that of a pine tree, for it shot up to a great height in the form of a trunk, which extended itself at the top into several branches; occasioned, I imagine, either by a momentary gust of air which blew it aloft and then, failing, forsook it, thus causing the cloud to expand laterally as it dissolved, or possibly the downward pressure of its own weight produced this effect. It was at one moment white, at another dark and spotted as if it had carried up earth and cinders with it.

My uncle, true scientist as he was, considered the phenomenon to be of importance and worth a nearer view. He ordered a light vessel to be got ready, and gave me the liberty, if I thought proper, to attend him. I replied I would rather study, for, as it happened, he had himself set me a theme for composition. As he was coming out of the house he received a note from Rectina, the wife of Bassus, who was in the utmost alarm at the imminent danger which threatened her, for her villa was situated just below us, and there was no way of escape except by sea; she earnestly entreated him therefore to come to save her from such deadly peril. He accordingly changed his first design, and what he began with a scientific, he continued in an heroic turn of mind. He ordered large galleys to be launched, and went himself on board one, with the intention of assisting not only Rectina, but many others; for the villas stand extremely thick upon that beautiful coast. Hastening to the place from whence others were flying, he steered his direct course to the point of danger, and with such freedom from fear as to be able to make and dictate his observations

upon the successive motions and figures of that dreadful scene.

And now the cinders, which grew thicker and hotter the nearer he approached, fell into the ships, then pumice stones and pieces of rock, blackened, scorched and splintered with the fire. Then the sea ebbed suddenly from under them, while the shore was blocked up by landslips from the mountains. After considering whether he should retreat, he replied to the captain, who was urging that course, "*Fortune favours the brave; carry me to Pomponianus.*" Pomponianus was then at Stabiae, distant by half the width of the bay (for, as you know, the shore, insensibly curving in its sweep, forms here a basin for the sea). He had already embarked his baggage, for though at Stabiae there was no present danger, yet it was in full view, and certain to be extremely near as soon as it should spread; and he was resolved to flee as soon as the contrary wind should cease. It was full favourable, however, for taking my uncle to Pomponianus. He embraces, comforts and encourages his alarmed friend, and to soothe his fears by his own unconcern, desires to be conducted to a bathroom; when, having bathed, he sat down to supper with great cheerfulness, or (what is equally heroic) with all the appearance of it.

In the meanwhile Mount Vesuvius was blazing in several places, with flames spreading and lowering whose refulgent brightness the darkness of the night set off. But my uncle, to soothe apprehensions, kept saying that some fires had been left alight by the terrified country people, and that what they saw were only deserted villas burning in the abandoned district. Then he retired to rest, and it is most certain that his rest was a deep slumber, for his breathing, which, as he was pretty fat, was heavy and sonorous, was heard by those who attended before his chamber door. The court which led to his apartment now lay so deep under a mixture of pumice stones and ashes that if he continued longer in his bedroom egress would have been impossible. On being aroused he came out and rejoined Pomponianus and the others, who had sat up all night. They consulted together whether they would hold out in the house or wander about in the open, for the house now tottered under repeated and violent concussions, and seemed

torn from its foundations. In the open air, on the other hand, there was the fear of falling pumice stones, light and porous though they were; yet this by comparison seemed the lesser danger of the two, a conclusion which my uncle reached by reason, the rest by balancing fears. They went out then, with pillows tied upon their heads with napkins, and this was their sole defence against the storm of stones that fell around them.

It was now day everywhere else, but there deeper darkness prevailed than in the darkest night, which was in some degree dissipated by torches and divers illuminations. They thought proper to go down farther upon the shore to observe if they might safely put out to sea, but they found the waves still ran extremely high and contrary. There my uncle, having thrown himself down upon a disused sail, called repeatedly for water, and drank it. Soon after the flames, heralded by a strong smell of sulphur, dispersed the rest of the company and put them to flight. My uncle they merely aroused. He raised himself up with the assistance of two of his slaves, but instantly fell, some unusually gross vapour, I conjecture, having obstructed his breathing, and blocked his windpipe, which was not only naturally weak and constricted, but chronically inflamed. When day dawned, the third from that he last beheld, his body was found entire and uninjured, still fully clothed, as if in life, looking more like one asleep than dead.

Meanwhile, my mother and I, who were at Misenum—but as this has no connection with history, and your inquiry went no further than concerning my uncle's death, I will put an end to my letter; suffer me only to add that I have faithfully related to you what I was either an eye-witness of myself, or heard at the time, when report speaks most truthfully. You will select what is most suitable to your purpose; for there is a great difference between a letter and a history; between writing to a friend and writing for the public. Farewell.

IT WAS characteristic of young *Pliny* that when his uncle invited him to accompany him on his scientific trip, he preferred to stay behind and study, thus probably saving his life. In an earlier letter to *Tacitus*, he confessed an interest in hunting the wild boar but added that while the beaters did their work, he sat taking notes. Both episodes are eloquent of the man's deep-seated preference for the sedentary life. When he was fifty years old, *Pliny* had to bid farewell to his villas and leisure. It was honourable exile, but exile none the less, and *Pliny* had only himself to blame. Having become an authority on the province of *Bithynia*, he was sent there as governor by his friend *Trajan*. Within two years his delicate health succumbed to the strenuous duties of his office, but not without leaving behind a voluminous correspondence with his imperial master, some of it devoted to *Pliny's* relations with the growing sect of Christians.

LUCIUS VERUS WARNS MARCUS AURELIUS AGAINST
TREACHERY, AND MARCUS RETURNS A PHIL-
OSOPHER'S ANSWER

[AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS]

MARCUS AURELIUS insisted upon sharing with his foster brother Lucius Verus the throne of the Roman Empire. An "old man who after the day's work was done went home and wrote down a platitude," Marcus stayed in Italy and attended to affairs of state while Lucius went to combat the Parthians in the East. Although courageous enough, Lucius was also an irresponsible goose, letting Avidius Cassius, his chief of staff, run the risks and win the battles. When the troops returned triumphant in 166, Lucius received the public honours. Infuriated at this injustice, Avidius Cassius began to plot against the brothers. Lucius heard about it and sent the following letter of warning to Marcus:

"... he calls you a philosophising old woman ..."

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AVIDIUS CASSIUS is avid to be Emperor, at least he seems so to me; and long ago in my grandfather's time, your father's time, he showed himself so. I wish you would see that he is kept under observation. He is dissatisfied with everything we do, he

is collecting great resources, and he laughs at our letters. He calls you a philosophising old woman and me a prodigal fool. Please consider what should be done. I don't dislike the man; but, if you keep in the camp a man whom the soldiers like to hear and like to see, look out lest you mismanage your own interests and your children's.

THIS is the way the serene Stoic philosopher made light of the matter :

“ . . . my children . . . let them perish.”

[166]

I HAVE read your letter; it is rather more anxious-minded than becomes an Emperor, and does not accord with present-day usage. For if Heaven has destined Cassius to receive the Empire, we could not kill him even if we wished. You remember your great-grandfather's saying: "No man can kill his successor." And if not, without any act of severity on our part, he will of himself fall into the trap of fate. Besides, we cannot make him out a traitor; nobody has come forward to accuse him, and as you yourself say, the soldiers love him. And also, it is in the nature of trials for high treason that people think that even those whose guilt is proved are the victims of power. So let him go his own gait, especially as he is a good general, strict and brave; indeed, the State cannot do without him. As to your suggestion that I should safeguard the welfare of my children by putting him to death, oh, no; if Avidius deserves more than my children to be loved, and if it is better for the Empire that Cassius live rather than they, let them perish.

LETTERS OF LUCIUS VERUS AND MARCUS AURELIUS

IN 169, after the death of Lucius Verus left Marcus Aurelius sole ruler, Avidius Cassius did indeed rebel, but within a few months was killed by his own soldiers. His policy of non-resistance (which, happily for the safety of the Roman Empire, Marcus did not invariably follow) vindicated, the author of the *Meditations*, which Renan called "the most human of all books", proved his greatness of heart. The Senate wanted to put to death not only the followers of Avidius Cassius but also his wife and children. The Emperor pleaded successfully for their lives, saying: "Let them everywhere, in all countries, talk about this example of your and my conception of what is right."

The Senate revoked their decrees against the family and followers of Avidius Cassius and hailed Marcus Aurelius for his philosophy, patience, learning, nobility, and goodness. "Because the gods protect you," it declared, "you conquer your enemies and overcome them that hate you."

SAINT PATRICK EXCORIATES A BARBARIC KING FOR
SLAUGHTERING AND ENSLAVING THE CHRIS-
TIAN OF IRELAND

[A LETTER TO COROTICUS, KING OF AIL]

PATRICK, the patron saint of Ireland, was born somewhere in Great Britain—a source of mortification to certain devout and patriotic Irishmen, who have tried vainly to locate his birthplace on their own “holy soil”. Not so many years ago there were a number of well-informed folk who believed that Patrick was a fiction. Others held that even “if he did exist, he was not himself, but a namesake,” a state of affairs that reminds one irresistibly of the second chapter of *Alice in Wonderland*. Here, the reader will remember, Alice, in the famous soliloquy that begins “I’m sure I’m not Ada,” proves by elimination that she is not one of her schoolmates but herself. In 1905, John Bagnell Bury, an Irish historian who cherished the curious notion that history is a science but who was otherwise quite sound, proved that Patrick was Patrick.

Born toward the close of the fourth century, Patrick led a life of adventure. He was captured in a raid, was sold as a slave to an Irish chieftain, went to Gaul to study with Martin of Tours, and returned to his parents’ home. There he felt a call to go and convert the pagan Irish. At first, after landing south of the site of Dublin, he was unsuccessful until he moved north into Ulster (now predominantly Protestant), where all flocked to him for baptism. Eventually, he travelled through most of Ireland to such effect that at his death, about 461, few districts remained heathen.

While Patrick was labouring in Ulster, Coroticus, a petty king ruling over a mixed mob of Scots and Picts, sent a foraging party into Ulster. Before returning overseas, Coroticus’ raiders—apostate Picts as well as

pagan Scots—attacked an assembly of Christians, killing some and enslaving others. It was then that Patrick sent this sharp letter of protest to Coroticus, who seems to have been a Christian:

*“Ravening wolves . . . have devoured the Lord’s
flock . . .”*

[c. 450]

I, PATRICK, a sinner and unlearned, declare that God created me Bishop in Ireland. Most surely I hold that it was from God that I received what I am, and therefore for the love of God I remain a pilgrim and an exile among a barbarous people. He is witness that I speak the truth. It was not my wish to utter the language of harshness and severity, but zeal for God constrains me, and the truth of Christ, who hath stirred me up for the love of my sons after the spirit, for whom I have left my country and my kindred, and am ready to give up my life also, if so be that I am worthy. I have made a vow to God to teach the heathen; let him despise me who will.

With my own hand I have composed and written these words, to be communicated to the soldiers of Coroticus; not to my fellow citizens, nor to those who are fellow citizens with the holy Romans, but to those who are fellow citizens with devils, by reason of their evil deeds. Enemies of truth, they die even whilst they live, allied with the Scots and the apostate Picts, eager, as it were, to glut themselves with the blood of innocent Christians, multitudes of whom I have begotten to God and confirmed in Christ.

For a cruel slaughter and massacre was committed on the persons of the newly baptized, while they were yet in their white

robes, on the morrow of their anointing, whilst the holy oil still shone upon their foreheads. Wherefore I sent a letter by a holy presbyter, whom from his infancy I had taught, together with other holy men, to entreat that they would restore some of the booty, or the baptized captives; but they scoffed at my envoys. Therefore I am in doubt for whom I should the rather mourn, whether for the slain, or for the captives, or for those whom Satan hath so grievously ensnared, who shall be delivered over to him to eternal pains of Hell; for whosoever committeth sin is the bondservant of sin, and is called a son of the devil.

Wherefore let all men that fear God know, that parricides and fratricides are strangers from me and from Christ, my God, whose ambassador I am, for they are ravening wolves, eating up the people of the Lord as they eat bread. As He saith, Lord, the wicked have destroyed thy law, which in this latter day was auspiciously and excellently planted in Ireland, and established by the favour of God.

I do not falsely set myself up; I have a part with those who have been called and predestined to preach the Gospel amidst no small persecutions, even to the end of the earth, even though the evil eye of the enemy is upon me through the tyranny of Coroticus, who feareth not God nor his chosen priests, to whom hath been granted the high and divine power, that those whom they bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven.

The most High approveth not the gifts of the wicked; he that offereth sacrifice from the goods of the poor is as one that sacrificeth a son in the presence of his father. The riches, He saith, which he hath gathered unjustly, shall be vomited forth from his belly. The angel of death draggeth him away. He will be tormented by the fury of dragons. The viper's tongue shall slay him, unquenchable fire devoureth him. And, therefore, woe to all those who fill themselves with what is not their own. And, What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

Was it without God, or according to the flesh, that I journeyed into Ireland? Who constrained me? I am bound in the spirit no

more to see my kindred. Is it from this that my devout compassion springeth, for a people which took me captive, and wrought havoc among the menservants and maidservants in my father's house? I am free-born after the flesh; my father was a decurion. But for the profit of others I sold my noble rank, I am not ashamed, nor do I repent it. In short I am a slave in Christ to an alien people for the glory that is beyond all speech, of the Eternal Life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And if my own people know me not—a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Not to me but to God be the praise, who put into my heart this earnest desire, that I should be one of the hunters and fishers, whom long since God foretold should come in the last days. I am envied. What shall I do, O Lord? Men despise me. Lo, around me thy sheep are pillaged and torn by these robbers aforesaid, by the order of our enemy Coroticus.

Far from the love of God is he who delivereth Christians into the hand of the Scots and Picts. Ravening wolves, they have devoured the Lord's flock which in Ireland was increasing, verily, with all speed, watched over with the greatest care. The sons and daughters of the Scottish chieftains, in numbers beyond my reckoning, were becoming monks and virgins of Christ.

It is the custom of the Gauls to send to the Franks and to other alien peoples holy and fit men, provided with thousands of gold pieces to redeem baptized captives. But you who so often slay them or sell them to foreign peoples ignorant of God, delivering them over, as it were, to a brothel, what manner of hope have you in God, or he who consenteth with you, or flattereth you? God will judge, for it is written, not only those who commit evil, but those who consent with them shall be damned.

I know not what more to say or speak about the sons of God departed, slain with the sword, for it is written—weep with them that weep, and again—if one member suffer, let all the members suffer with it. Wherefore the Church weepeth and lamenteth her sons and daughters whom the sword hath not yet slain, but who are exiled, carried off to far lands, where sin openly and shamelessly

aboundeth. There Christian freemen are sold and reduced to slavery, and worst of all, to the vile, degraded, and apostate Picts.

Wherefore I grieve for you, I grieve, my well-beloved, for myself, but at the same time rejoice that I have not laboured in vain, and that my pilgrimage hath not been fruitless. A crime hath been committed which is dreadful and unspeakable. Thanks to God, it was as baptized believers that you departed into Paradise from this world. I behold you, you have begun your journey to that region where there shall be no night nor sorrow nor death any more, but ye shall leap as calves loosened from their bands, and ye shall tread down the wicked and they shall be ashes under your feet.

Ye, therefore, shall reign with apostles and martyrs, and receive an everlasting kingdom, as He himself beareth witness with you, saying—they shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and with Isaac and with Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. Without are dogs and sorcerers and murderers; and liars and false swearers shall have their part in the lake of everlasting fire. Not unjustly the Apostle saith—where the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly transgressor of the law discover himself?

Where then shall Coroticus and his accursed followers see themselves, who distribute baptized damsels among their depraved followers, and all for the sake of a wretched temporal kingdom, which passeth away in a moment like a cloud, or smoke scattered by the wind? So shall the deceitful wicked perish at the presence of the Lord, but let the righteous feast continually with Christ, and judge the nations, and rule over unjust kings for ever and ever. Amen.

I earnestly entreat whatever servant of God is willing to bear this letter, that it may on no account be kept back, or concealed by anyone, but rather may be read before all the people, in the presence of Coroticus himself—if God may inspire them at some time to amend their lives and return to Him. So that they may repent, even late, of their evil deeds, and though murderers of the Lord's brethren, may release the baptized women captives,

SAINT PATRICK TO COROTICUS, KING OF AIL

that they may be worthy to live to God, and to be made whole from now to all eternity. Peace—in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen.

THE results of Patrick's letter to Coroticus are not known, but there must be the echo of fact in the legend that the saint changed the chieftain into a fox. It hints that Coroticus declined to give up the captives.

SIDONIUS LIMNS THE PORTRAIT OF A ROMAN SYCO- PHANT

[A LETTER TO HIS SON APOLLINARIS]

IF THE pious William Jennings Bryan had retired from political life after his third defeat for the presidency and had become Bishop of Nebraska, even his most prejudiced admirers would probably have thought his conduct most odd.

In the fifth century, however, it was not uncommon for disgruntled statesmen to retire, or to be retired, to the cloister of some other sphere of religious activity. Consider Apollinaris Sidonius. Nobody worked harder at politics. He had the requisites for a brilliant career—noble descent, the equivalent of an Oxford or Harvard schooling, and a persuasive personality. He knew the right people and married the right girl.

But Sidonius lived in difficult times. France, his native country, though largely loyal to the Roman Empire, was exposed to barbarian inroads. Great Gallo-Roman lords like Sidonius, basically devoted to the Empire but sceptical of its strength, thought it politic to fraternise with such barbarians as had gained a solid hold in Gaul. Sidonius, a man of principle, was not above paying court to the Visigothic ruler, Theodoric II, who had gained the throne through fratricide. Further, in 454 he sent to an influential kinsman a flattering description of Theodoric, which reads in part:

Well, he is a man worth knowing . . . so happily have Providence and Nature joined to endow him with the perfect gifts of fortune; his way of life is such that not even the envy which lies in wait for kings can rob him of his proper praise.

This prefaces a minute account of what must be called, from the lushness of the words, Theodoric's "physical charms", to which succeeds an unctuous

recital of the King's conduct at the council board, the banquet table, and the chase.

Eulogy was Sidonius' métier. Such a letter might have brought him honour at Theodoric's court had not his own father-in-law, Avitus, become Emperor of the West the very next year. Avitus lasted just long enough for Sidonius to pronounce his official panegyric in Rome. Then he was murdered, and his son-in-law had to begin again his jockeying for political power. For fifteen years he shuttled back and forth between Rome and his estates in central Gaul, hoping finally to attain, by obsequious oratory, the meaningless but tradition-laden consulate. Luck was against him: competition, even in a dying enterprise like the Roman Empire, was tremendous. First Prefect of Rome, then Patrician—but never more than candidate for Consul.

The following letter was written in 469 when Sidonius, become Prefect, was at the top of his hopes:

" . . . his heart is no less filthy than his language."

[c. A.D. 469]

THE love of purity which leads you to shun the company of the immodest has my whole approval; I rejoice at it and respect it, especially when the men you shun are those whose aptitude for scenting and retailing scandals leaves nothing privileged or sacred, wretches who think themselves enormously facetious when they violate the public sense of shame by shameless language. Hear now from my lips that the standard-bearer of the vile troop is the very Gnatho of our country. Imagine an arch-stringer of tales, arch-fabricator of false charges, arch-retailer of insinuations. A fellow whose talk is at once without end and without point; a buffoon without charm in gaiety; a bully who dares not stand his ground. Inquisitive without insight, and three-times more the

boor for his brazen affectation of fine manners. A creature of the present hour, with ever a carping word ready for the past and a sneer for the future. When he is after some advantage, no beggar so importunate as he; when refused, none so bitter in depreciation. Grant his request and he grumbles, using every artifice to get better terms; he moans and groans when called on to refund a debt, and if he pays, you never hear the end of it. But when anyone wants a loan of him he lies about his means and pretends he has not the wherewithal; if he does lend, he makes capital out of the loan, and bruits the secret abroad; if debtors delay repayment he resorts to calumny; when they have absolved the debt he tries to deny receipt.

Abstinence is his abomination, he loves the table; but a man who lives well wins no praise from him unless he treats well too. Personally, he is avarice itself; the best of bread is not for his digestion unless it is also the bread of others. He only eats at home if he can pilfer his viands, and send them off amid a storm of buffets. He cannot indeed be wholly denied the virtue of frugality; he fasts when he cannot get himself invited. Yet with the light perversity of the parasite, he will often excuse himself when asked; on the other hand, if he sees that men avoid him, he will fish for invitations. If left out he grows abusive; if admitted, unbearably elate: no blow descends on him unexpected. If dinner is served late, he falls like a bandit upon the dishes; if appetite is stilled too soon, he falls to lamentation. Thirst unquenched makes him quarrelsome; drunkenness makes him sick.

If he banters others, he grows scurrilous; if others banter him, ungovernable; take him for all in all, he is like the filth in sewers, the fouler the more you stir it. His life brings pleasure to few, love to none, contemptuous mockery to all. He is one to burst bladders or break canes upon, one whose thirst for drink is only excelled by his thirst for scandal; exhaling loathsomeness, frothing wine, uttering venom, he makes one doubt for what to hate him most, his unsavouriness, his drunken habits, or his villainy. "But," you may say, "perhaps a fair complexion lends a colour to a vile nature; perhaps his charm of person redeems ineptitude

of mind; the man may have elegance or exquisite taste; he may create a good impression on those who meet him."

In point of fact, his person is fouler and more unsightly than a corpse rolled half-burnt from the pyre when the brands have settled—such a thing as a very undertaker's slave could not bring himself to put back. He hardly sees out of his eyes, which, like the Stygian lake, roll waters down through darkness. His ears are elephantine; an ulcered skin surrounds each aperture with indurated waste, either helix is bossed with suppurating tumours. His nose is broad at the nostril and narrow at the bridge, strait for his own olfactory ends, but for the spectator a cavernous vision; of horror. He obtrudes a face with leaden lips and a bestial rictus, with purulent gums and brown teeth; a foul nephritic odour breathes from his decayed and hollow teeth, enhanced by eructations from the feast of yesterday and the bilge of his excesses at the board. A forehead too he flaunts hideous with creases and distension of the brows. He grows a beard which age vainly whitens, since Sylla's malady keeps it black. His whole face is as pale as if it were ever dolorous with infesting shades. I spare you the hulking residue, gout-ridden, fat and flabby. I spare you his weal-furrowed skull, covered with almost as many scars as hairs. I spare you the description of a nape so short that when his head is thrown back it seems to merge into his shoulder blades.

The sunken carriage, the lost grace and vigour of his arms, the gouty hands bound cestus-like with greasy poultices: all these I spare you, so too the acrid hircine armpits that entrench his sides, and pollute the air for every nostril near him with a reek three times more pestilent than that from Ampsanctus' cave. And breasts collapsed with adiposity horrible on a man's body even in mere protuberance, but now hanging like a mother's. And the pendulous folds of the abdomen about genitals thrice shameful in their debility, a foul creased covering worse than what it hides. Why should I tell of his back and spine? True, the ribs do sweep round from the vertebral joints and cover the chest, but the whole branching structure of bones is drowned under a billowing main

of belly. I pass over the fat reins and buttocks which make even his paunch look insignificant in comparison. I pass the bent and withered thigh, the swollen knees, the slender hams, the horny shanks, the weak ankles, the small toes and enormous feet.

As I have drawn him, he is horrible enough in his deformity, a monster from whom his infinite noisomeness drains half the blood and life, who cannot sit a litter or walk a yard, however much they prop him. But his tongue is more detestable still than his other members. He keeps it busy in the service of the vilest prurience; but it is most dangerous of all to patrons with anything to hide. For those in luck he belauds, but those who are unfortunate he betrays; let a tempting moment but urge to disclosure of a friend's secret, and instantly this Spartacus will break all bars and open every seal. He will mine with the unseen tunnels of his treachery the houses which the rams of open war have failed to breach. This is the fashion in which our Daedalus crowns the edifice of his friendships, sticking as close as Theseus in prosperity; but when adversity comes, more elusive than any Proteus. The more you avoid even a first introduction to such company the better you will please me; especially to those so shameless that they talk like degraded players at the booths, and know neither bar nor bridle. For when a man exults in leaving all seemliness and decency behind, and fouls a loose tongue with the dirt of all lawless licence, be sure his heart is no less filthy than his language. You may find an evil liver with a serious tongue; the foul tongue and virtuous life are very rarely allied. Farewell.

S*IX or seven years before the final dissolution of the Western Roman Empire, Sidonius left Rome for good. No doubt he saw trouble ahead and gave up his secular ambitions in disgust. At first, he resumed his former position as a lord of vast estates, and then—quite suddenly, it seems—he was drafted as bishop of the old Gallic town now known as Clermont, where Urban II was later to preach the First Crusade. Here Sidonius might have vegetated had not the Visigothic overlord—*

Theodoric's successor—been a heretic. They collided. Sidonius suffered a siege and was imprisoned for a time. His conduct was exemplary, probably heroic, possibly saintly. At last he was allowed to return to his flock.

DANTE ALIGHIERI, AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS OF EXILE,
SPURNS A "GRACIOUS RECALL" TO HIS NATIVE
FLORENCE

[A LETTER TO A FRIEND]

DANTE ALIGHIERI, *the supreme poet of the Middle Ages, spent the last twenty years of his life exiled from his native Florence. As early as 1295, when he was thirty years old, Dante was taking an active part in city politics. With the great vision of a united Italy ever before his eyes (for he was, in this respect, a precursor of Machiavelli), Dante was a Ghibelline. That is, he belonged to the Imperialist party and hoped to see the scores of tiny city-states, lordships, and other territorial divisions co-existing amicably under the sway of a sympathetic Holy Roman Emperor. He dreamed of a universal empire sharing power with a universal church. But just as the violent Ghibellines wished the Emperor to be an all-powerful tyrant, so the violent Guelfs—members of the papal party—wished the Pope to have it all his own way.*

Unfortunately for Dante, the Ghibellines were the weaker faction in Florence, and in 1302 their leaders, himself among them, were banished from the city. He now became a homeless wanderer, honoured at some courts for his genius but in peril wherever Florence had an ally. For years the hope of an honourable return to the beautiful city on the Arno never left his mind, and on one or two occasions its fruition seemed probable. When Henry VII, the Galahad of the Ghibellines, died in 1313, Dante, without a champion of his great ideals, must have seemed harmless to the Guelfs. A general pardon for the exiled Ghibellines came three years later, and Dante's friends urged him to take advantage of it.

But this "pardon" was no pardon at all—the conditions attached to

it were too humiliating for a man of Dante's proud and noble spirit. He could return if he would pay a sum of money and walk, with a paper mitre on his head, in a penitential procession. Dante, always abnormally impatient of anything that would detract a jot from his dignity, sent a scorching letter to the unknown friend who had invited him to undergo such indignities :

*“Can I not anywhere gaze upon the face of the
sun and the stars?”*

[1316]

FROM your letter, which I received with due respect and affection, and have diligently studied, I learn with gratitude how my recall to Florence has been the object of your care and concern; and I am the more beholden to you therefor, inasmuch as it rarely happens that an exile finds friends. My reply to what you have written, although perchance it be not of such tenor as certain faint hearts would desire, I earnestly beg may be carefully examined and considered by you before judgment be passed upon it.

I gather, then, from the letter of your nephew and mine, as well as from those of sundry other friends, that, by the terms of a decree lately promulgated in Florence touching the pardon of the exiles, I may receive pardon, and be permitted to return forthwith, on condition that I pay a certain sum of money, and submit to the stigma of the oblation—two propositions, my father, which in sooth are as ridiculous as they are ill advised—ill advised, that is to say, on the part of those who have communicated them, for in your letter, which was more discreetly and cautiously formulated, no hint of such conditions was conveyed.

This, then, is the gracious recall of Dante Alighieri to his native city, after the miseries of well-nigh fifteen years of exile! This is the reward of innocence manifest to all the world, and of the sweat and toil of unremitting study! Far be from a familiar of philosophy such a senseless act of abasement as to submit himself to be presented at the oblation, like a felon in bonds, as one Ciolo and other infamous wretches have done! Far be it from the preacher of justice, after suffering wrong, to pay of his money to those that wronged him, as though they had deserved well of him!

No! my father, not by this path will I return to my native city. If some other can be found, in the first place by yourself and thereafter by others, which does not derogate from the fame and honour of Dante, that will I tread with no lagging steps. But if by no such path Florence may be entered, then will I enter Florence never. What! Can I not anywhere gaze upon the face of the sun and the stars? Can I not under any sky contemplate the most precious truths, without first returning to Florence, disgraced, nay dishonoured, in the eyes of my fellow citizens? Assuredly bread will not fail me!

FROM Florence came no response to the noble rhetoric of the last paragraph. Since Dante did not choose to comply with the conditions of recall, the decree of banishment remained in force until it was rescinded, almost two hundred years after his death, by Lorenzo the Magnificent. Not in Florence, Tuscany's city of flowers, but in Ravenna, the sad capital of Byzantium's vanished claims to Italy, did Dante finish *The Divine Comedy*. He had begun it shortly after the death of Henry VII had killed his political ambitions: to finish the "Paradise" in Florence would have harmonised with the lofty design of the *Comedy*. But it was not to be, and when Dante died in his fifty-sixth year he was still, in a mundane sense, detained in "Hell".

PETRARCH CLIMBS TO THE TOP OF MONT VENTOUX
AND LOOKS UPON THE GRANDEUR OF THE
HUMAN SOUL

[A LETTER TO FRA DIONISIO ROBERTI]

DANTE has been called "the morning star of the Renaissance," a careless way of describing the poet who gave the fullest literary expression of the spirit of the Middle Ages. The description seems rather to fit Petrarch, who was a seventeen-year-old student at Montpellier and already "enraptured with the style of Cicero and of Virgil" when Dante died at Ravenna. Petrarch lived out his superficially uneventful life with the fretful, nervous energy of a man who fully appreciated that he was a transitional figure living in an age of transition. Everything he did testified to the dualism of his nature: he vacillated between long periods of solitude and of wandering, sometimes aimlessly, from place to place. He loved the privilege of loneliness and just as much loved being lionised by the polite society of Avignon, Rome, and Milan.

Ernest Renan styled Petrarch "the first modern man". That he loved to insanity the literature of old Rome does not differentiate him, but that he looked at it critically, trying to find its significance in the life of fourteenth-century man, suggests that the spirit of the Renaissance was alive in him. Nor did Latin alone satisfy him: he became a pioneer in Greek studies, buying manuscripts of Homer and Plato. These he never learned to read, for there was no one to teach him after he unselfishly had recommended his first and only tutor for a bishopric. He was inquisitive, sometimes like an antiquarian ferret, but at other times with the freshness and spontaneity of a mind fascinated by the wonderfulness of life.

On April 26, 1336, with his stalwart brother Gherardo, Petrarch made

the ascent of Mont Ventoux, a 6400-foot peak near Avignon. He did not climb the mountain because he had to but because he wanted to—in short, for pleasure and self-instruction. While the men of the Middle Ages had sometimes to climb mountains in getting from one place to another, their typical attitude, as Ruskin points out, was that mountains were “agreeable things enough, so long as they were far enough away.” Therefore, Petrarch’s story of his ascent is, in a minor way, a revolutionary document:

“. . . the clouds were beneath my feet.”

[April 26, 1336]

TODAY I made the ascent of the highest mountain of this district, which is not unfitly called “Ventoux” [Windy], induced by the single desire of seeing the remarkable height of the place. I have had this expedition in mind for many years. For from my infancy, as you know, I have haunted this region through the fate which haunts human affairs; and this mountain, conspicuous from all quarters, is almost always in view. At length an impulse seized me to accomplish at once what I was always purposing—all the more when, in re-reading Livy’s Roman History, I yesterday came upon the passage where Philip, King of Macedon—the same who waged war with Rome—ascended Mount Haemus in Thessaly, from the summit of which the two seas, the Adriatic and the Euxine, could be seen, as report said—I know not whether true or false, for the mountain is a long way from our part of the world, and writers differ on the matter. To mention no more, the geographer Pomponius Mela asserts the fact without hesitation; Livy considers the report false. If I could explore that mountain as easily as this, the matter should not be long in doubt. But leaving that and returning to this, I thought that what is not blamed in

an aged king would be held excusable in a youth in private life.

But when I reflected about a companion—strange to say, not one of my friends appeared entirely suitable. Even among those dear to us an absolute concord of wills and habits is a rare thing. One seemed over-anxious, another too inert; this one too slow and that one too hasty; a fifth too sad and a sixth too cheerful—in fine, some were more foolish, others more cautious than I could wish. The taciturnity of one, the forwardness of another, one man's weight and fat, another's leanness and debility deterred me; one I rejected for a cold want of curiosity, another for too eager pre-occupation with his own affairs. These defects, however serious, we bear with at home; for charity suffers all things, and friendship accepts every burden: but on a journey they become more serious still. And so my fastidious disposition, seeking its proper enjoyment, looked round and balanced each trait of character; and without any breach of friendship, it silently condemned whatever it foresaw would be troublesome on the proposed trip. At last, as you may guess, I looked to my own family for help, and unfolded the plan to my only brother, younger than myself, whom you know very well. He was delighted to hear of it and gratified that I should look to him to act the part of friend as well as brother.

On the appointed day we left our home, and arrived at dusk at Malaucène, a place lying under the northern face of the mountain. After staying there a day, we at length, taking a servant apiece, ascended the peak today with a good deal of difficulty. It is a precipitous and inaccessible mass of rocky ground; but as the poet well says: "Relentless toil conquers all." The day was long, the weather was kind; we all had such gifts as strength of mind and vigorous activity of body; our sole hindrance was the steep and trackless route. On the lower folds of the mountain we met an old shepherd, who tried hard to dissuade us from the ascent, saying that fifty years before, in an access of youthful ardour like our own, he had himself reached the top, and had gained nothing from it but repentance and toil, a body bruised and clothes torn with rocks and briars, and that he had never, either before or since that time, heard of anyone who had dared the like.

While he shouted all this to us, our desire to proceed was increased by his dissuasion, for young men put no faith in such warnings. So, when the old man saw his efforts were in vain, he went a little way with us and pointed out a steep path among the cliffs, giving us much good advice, and continuing it even after we had parted from him. Before he went off we left with him such garments and other things as impeded us, and grappled with the single task of the ascent, mounting up with eagerness. But, as often happens, the mighty effort was soon followed by fatigue; so, not far from there, we rested on a crag.

Starting thence, we pushed on again, but more slowly; I in particular took the mountain path at a more moderate pace. My brother, indeed, took a short cut to the height by breasting the slopes of the crest itself, while I more weakly inclined downwards, and, when he called me back and pointed to the direct route, I replied that I hoped to find an easier approach on the other side, and that I was not afraid of a longer way, if the climbing proved less stiff. This was a mere excuse for my loitering; and while the others were now far above me, I was wandering in the dales, where no easier track appeared in any direction, but the distance increased, and with it my futile toil.

At length, being exhausted and weary of this aimless wandering, I set myself to scale the heights right ahead. And when, tired and perturbed, I reached my brother, who was waiting for me and had been refreshed by a long rest, we walked for a while side by side. But when we had left that slope, I actually forgot my former digression and strayed off to lower ground; and again traversing the valleys, I followed their easy length and got into serious difficulty. The truth was that I was shirking the trouble of climbing; but human ingenuity cannot alter the nature of things, nor is it possible for anything corporeal to reach the heights by going downwards. In short, to my brother's amusement and my own disgust, this sort of thing happened three or four times in a few hours.

Having been often tricked in this way, I sat down in a kind of dell. There, passing in swift thought from the corporeal to the spiritual, I addressed myself in words like these: "Rest assured that

what thou hast so often experienced today in climbing this mountain happens to thyself and many who strive after the blessed life. And the reason why men do not so clearly perceive it is that the movements of the body are in the open, while those of the soul are unseen and hidden. Indeed, the blessed life, as we call it, is situated on a lofty summit, and 'narrow is the way' that leads thereto. Many hills there are which rise in between, and one must advance from virtue to virtue, as up a splendid series of steps. At the top is the end of all, and the goal of the way at which our pilgrimage is aimed. There all wish to arrive, but, as Ovid says, 'To wish is small; we needs must long to reach it.' No doubt thou hast not only the wish, but the eager longing, unless in this, as in so much else, thou deceivest thyself. What holds thee back? Surely nought but the more level path along earthly and mean delights, which at first sight seems the easier. However, when thou hast wandered far, thou must either mount beneath the weight of toil long deferred to the very peak of the blessed life, or thou must lie inert in the valley of thy sins; or, if darkness and the shadow of death come upon thee, thou must pass an eternal night in perpetual torment."

This thought, strange to say, invigorated me both in mind and body, for the work that still remained. God grant that in spirit I may so accomplish that for which I sigh day and night, as by overcoming all difficulties I accomplished my journey today with my bodily feet. I fancy that the task for the nimble and immortal soul in the twinkling of an eyelid, without any movement in space, should be even easier than that which had to be undergone in slow time by the frail and mortal body beneath the heavy weight of its limbs.

The highest summit of all is that which the woodmen call "The Little Son"—why I know not, unless, like so many other things, it be by antiphrasis, for it seems the father of all the neighbouring heights. On its top there is a small level space, where at last we rested our weary limbs. Since you have heard the cares which rose up into the heart of the climber, listen, father, to what follows, and give up an hour to reading of the doings of one of my days.

First of all, braced by the nip of the keen air and the extent of the view, I stood as one dazed. I looked back; the clouds were beneath my feet. And now the stories of Athos and Olympus seem less incredible to me, as I behold on a mountain of lesser fame what I had heard and read of them. I turn my eye's glance in the direction of Italy, whither my heart most inclines. The very Alps, snow-covered and icebound—over which that savage foe of the Roman name passed (if we believe the story) by melting the icy path with vinegar—seemed close to me, though they are at so great a distance. I confess I sighed for the skies of Italy, which I looked upon with my mind rather than with my eyes, and an irrepressible longing seized me to behold my friend and my country; and yet I blamed the softness of these scarcely manly feelings—though an excuse might be found for both, supported by the testimony of great writers.

Then a new thought possessed me, which drew me from present sights to bygone time. I said to myself: "Today marks the close of the tenth year since, putting away thy boyish studies, thou didst leave Bologna; and (O Eternal God! O Changeless Wisdom!) how many great changes in thy character has the intervening time disclosed!" I pass over countless things; for I am not yet in port, that I should recall in security the storms of the past. Perchance a time may come when I shall review all in the order in which they happened, saying with your Augustine: "I wish to remember my past uncleannesses and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not because I love them, but that I may love Thee, O my God."

Many doubtful and difficult struggles lie before me! What I used to love, I love no longer—nay, I lie, I do love, but with more restraint, more moderately, more regretfully. Now at length I speak the truth; I do love, but what I would fain not love, what I long to hate. My love is unwilling, constrained, the source of grief and sorrow; I can echo the sentiment of that famous line:

*If 'tis within my power, I'll hate; if not,
Love in my own despite.*

The third year has not yet elapsed since that perverse and wicked desire, which then had full possession of me and reigned alone and unopposed in my heart's palace, began to find an opponent struggling against it; and between these for a long time a severe and still doubtful battle for supremacy is being fought out on the field of my thoughts.

Thus I revolved in my mind the completed ten years, and from them I turned to the future and asked myself: "If thou art permitted to prolong this fleeting life for another ten years, and improve proportionately in virtue as in the last two thou hast receded from thy old obstinacy, through the conflict of the new with the old will, could'st thou face death in thy fortieth year with assurance, or at least with hope, and await with tranquillity the rest of life verging on old age?"

Such thoughts as these, father, were coursing through me. I rejoiced at my improvement, mourned its imperfection and bewailed the common frailty of human conduct, forgetting where I was, how I appeared to others, and the object I had in coming. At length, dismissing my troubles for which some other place was more fitting, I looked about me and saw what I had come to see. For being reminded that it was time to return, as the sun was already sinking and the shadow of the mountain growing longer, I turn, like one roused from sleep, to look back towards the west. The Pyrenean range, that boundary between France and Spain, is not seen from thence—not that any natural barrier, so far as I know, intervenes, but simply from the weakness of mortal sight. But the mountains of the Lyons province on the right, and on the left the bay of Marseilles, which lashes the shore of Aigues Mortes, were seen splendidly, though several days' journey away. The Rhone itself lay under our very eyes.

While I marvelled at these things in turn, now recognising some earthly object, now lifting my soul upwards as my body had been, I thought of looking at the book of Augustine's *Confessions*, the gift of your love—which I never forget for the sake both of author and giver, and which I always have with me. I opened the little volume, of handy size but of infinite charm, in order to read what-

ever met my eye, for nothing could meet it but what was pious and devout. I opened it by chance at the tenth book, while my brother stood intent, expecting to hear Augustine speak by my mouth. I call God to witness, and my listener too, that these were the words on which my eyes fell: "Men go abroad to admire the heights of mountains, and the mighty billows, and the long-winding courses of rivers—the compass of the ocean and the courses of the stars—and themselves they neglect."

I confess I was amazed; and begging my brother, who was eager to hear more, not to trouble me, I closed the book, indignant with myself that at that very moment I was admiring earthly things—I, who ought to have learnt long ago from even heathen philosophers that there is nothing admirable but the soul—in itself so great that nothing can be great beside it. Then indeed, content with what I had seen from the mountain, I turned my eyes inwardly upon myself, and from that moment none heard me say a word till we reached the bottom.

That passage had given me enough to think about, nor could I suppose that the thing had happened by chance; for I remembered that Augustine himself once had the same suspicion, when, as he tells us, in reading the Apostle's book, this first met his eye: "Not in banquets and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and rivalry—but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in your lusts." And the same, too, had happened before to Antony [St. Anthony of Egypt], who heard this passage from the Gospel read: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow me, and thou shalt find treasure in heaven"; and as Athanasius his biographer says, he took this scripture as addressed to himself, and obeyed the Lord's command.

And just as Antony, when he had heard that, asked for no more, and as Augustine, when he had read that, went no further, so for me the limit of my reading was the passage I have set down. I pondered in silence on the poverty of men's designs, who, neglecting the noblest part of their being and seeking without what could be found within, spend themselves in countless things, and

waste their strength on empty shows. I thought with amazement of the grandeur of the human soul—unless through degeneration it has wandered from its original elements, and has turned what God gave it for glory into disgrace. How often, as I went back on that day, did I turn and look back at the mountain top, and it seemed but a cubit high as compared with the range of human thought, unless the latter be plunged in the mire of early uncleanness.

This, too, came into my mind at every step: if we freely undergo such sweat and toil in order to raise the body a little nearer heaven, what cross or prison or sting should keep the soul from approaching to God, and from rising superior to the summits of pride and the doom of death! And I thought how few are not diverted from this path either by the fear of hardship or the desire of comfort. Too happy he, if any such there be! Of him methinks the poet was speaking, when he says:

*Blest is the mortal, who has learnt the lore
Of Nature's lessons, spurning the fear of death
And fate's decree, and the loud threats of Hell.*

How earnestly should we strive—not to stand on lofty spots on earth, but to have beneath our feet the appetites that spring from earthly impulses!

With no consciousness of the rugged track, amid these emotions of my storm-tossed heart, I returned in the dead of night to the little rustic inn, from which I started before dawn, and the high full moon gave us grateful assistance as we went. Then I, while the servants were engaged in preparing supper, went off alone to a retired part of the house in order to write this at speed and on the spur of the moment, fearing that if I put it off, my purpose of writing might cool down through change of mood resulting from change of place. Take note, most loving father, that I want nothing within me screened from your eyes, while I so diligently reveal not only my life in general, but my separate reflections. Pray, I beg you, that these thoughts, so long wandering and

unsettled, may soon become firmly fixed; and that after long and aimless employment on many subjects, they may be turned to the one true, sure, enduring good. Farewell.

PETRARCH has been censured sharply for marring the pleasure of the view from the top of Mount Ventoux with a pessimistic meditation on the state of his soul. But the critics forget that he was, first of all, a medieval man and that it was far more natural for him to open his Augustine for a sign than to go climbing for pleasure. They forget that many a poet of the "age of feeling" became above the clouds quite as gloomily introspective as Petrarch. They forget that he was in the midst of a, to him, guilty love affair, which he was to celebrate, after his Laura's death, with sonnets whose loveliness remind us that their writer was of Dante's Tuscany. They forget, finally, that Petrarch's correspondent—Fra Dionisio Roberti—happened to be his father confessor and that the self-searchings may have been elaborated for his sake particularly since the friar had recommended Augustine's Confessions to Petrarch as an enriching book of devotions.

Moreover, many readers have been moved by that sudden change in mood when Petrarch, assailed by melancholy, turns naturally to Augustine. John Addington Symonds wrote finely of the scene: "Few things in the history of literature are more touching than this spiritual comradeship—Petrarch clasping hands with St. Augustine across the Lethe of nine medieval centuries, the last man of the classic age and the first man of the modern mingling their souls in sympathy of sentiment."

CATHERINE OF SIENA PLEADS WITH THE POPE TO END THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

[A LETTER TO GREGORY XI]

THE transference of the papal power from Rome to Avignon in 1305 deeply agitated the thinkers of the time. Looked at dispassionately, it was a practical move to secure freedom of action for the papacy: Italy was torn by party strife, while Avignon belonged to a France that possessed a stable government. Unfortunately, Clement V, who was responsible for the change, was a Frenchman, and it was rumoured that he had made a secret agreement with Philip the Fair of France to move to Avignon if he were elected Pope. This was mere calumny—Clement V often favoured the Holy Roman Empire against France, and the whole aim of his policy was to reign independently. Yet, Clement's position on French soil inevitably endangered the very freedom of action that he had sought, and he and his six successors, all of French birth, found their title of Universal Pontiff increasingly emptied of meaning.

As Clement had conducted a brisk business in the sale of Church offices, Dante placed him in the *Inferno* among the simonists. As long as he lived the poet deplored the self-imposed exile of the Popes, even though he had little use for them as men. Petrarch unsuccessfully pleaded with Benedict XII, immediately after his accession in 1334, to live in Rome. Other men of distinction had argued vainly for return, but it was left for a woman to win over the last of the Avignon Popes, Gregory XI.

Catherine of Siena, the successful mediator, was a simple Dominican nun. She was also one of the most remarkable women in the history of Italy—a mystic, philanthropist, and politician fused into a natural force. Selflessness, a firm belief in her mission to do good, innate genius, and quenchless energy carried her to a commanding position. Surrounded

by adoring cultists and assisted by secretaries to whom she dictated her immense correspondence, Catherine gradually became the peacemaker of Italian politics. Her influence became so great that she was emboldened to begin negotiations with Avignon about the return to Rome. The following letter, apart from its fervent, dramatic language, is notable for containing a clear statement of Catherine's three-point programme for the Pope: residence in Rome, reform of the Church, and the pacification of Italy:

“ . . . come, come, come, and do not wait for
time . . . ”

[1376 (?)]

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED
AND OF SWEET MARY:

MOST holy and dear and sweet father in Christ sweet Jesus: I your unworthy daughter Catherine, servant and slave of the servants of Jesus Christ, write to you in His precious Blood. With desire have I desired to see in you the fullness of divine grace, in such wise that you may be the means, through divine grace, of pacifying all the universal world. Therefore, I beg you, sweet my father, to use the instrument of your power and virtue, with zeal, and hungry desire for the peace and honour of God and the salvation of souls. And should you say to me, father—"The world is so ravaged! How shall I attain peace?"

I tell you, on behalf of Christ crucified, it befits you to achieve three chief things through your power. Do you uproot in the garden of Holy Church the malodorous flowers, full of impurity

and avarice, swollen with pride: that is, the bad priests and rulers who poison and rot that garden. Ah me, you our Governor, do you use your power to pluck out those flowers! Throw them away, that they may have no rule! Insist that they study to rule themselves in holy and good life. Plant in this garden fragrant flowers, priests and rulers who are true servants of Jesus Christ, and care for nothing but the honour of God and the salvation of souls, and are fathers of the poor.

Alas, what confusion is this, to see those who ought to be a mirror of voluntary poverty, meek as lambs, distributing the possessions of Holy Church to the poor: and they appear in such luxury and state and pomp and worldly vanity, more than if they had turned them to the world a thousand times! Nay, many seculars put them to shame who live a good and holy life. But it seems that Highest and Eternal Goodness is having that done by force which is not done by love; it seems that He is permitting dignities and luxuries to be taken away from His Bride, as if He would show that Holy Church should return to her first condition, poor, humble, and meek as she was in that holy time when men took note of nothing but the honour of God and the salvation of souls, caring for spiritual things and not for temporal. For ever since she has aimed more at temporal than at spiritual, things have gone from bad to worse. See therefore that God, in judgment, has allowed much persecution and tribulation to befall her.

But comfort you, father, and fear not for anything that could happen, which God does to make her state perfect once more, in order that lambs may feed in that garden, and not wolves who devour the honour that should belong to God, which they steal and give to themselves. Comfort you in Christ sweet Jesus; for I hope that His aid will be near you, plenitude of divine grace, aid and support divine in the way that I said before. Out of war you will attain greatest peace; out of persecution, greatest unity; not by human power, but by holy virtue, you will discomfort those visible demons, wicked men, and those invisible demons who never sleep around us.

But reflect, sweet father, that you could not do this easily unless

you accomplished the other two things which precede the completion of the other: that is, your return to Rome and uplifting of the standard of the most holy Cross. Let not your holy desire fail on account of any scandal or rebellion of cities which you might see or hear; nay, let the flame of holy desire be more kindled to wish to do swiftly. Do not delay, then, your coming. Do not believe the devil, who perceives his own loss, and so exerts himself to rob you of your possessions in order that you may lose your love and charity and your coming be hindered. I tell you, father in Christ Jesus, come swiftly like a gentle lamb. Respond to the Holy Spirit who calls you. I tell you, come, come, come, and do not wait for time, since time does not wait for you. Then you will do like the Lamb Slain whose place you hold, who without weapons in His hand slew our foes, coming in gentleness, using only the weapons of the strength of love, aiming only at care of spiritual things, and restoring grace to man who had lost it through sin.

Alas, sweet my father, with this sweet hand I pray you, and tell you to come to discomfit our enemies. On behalf of Christ crucified I tell it you: refuse to believe the counsels of the devil, who would hinder your holy and good resolution. Be manly in my sight, and not timorous. Answer God, who calls you to hold and possess the seat of the glorious Shepherd St. Peter, whose vicar you have been. And raise the standard of the holy Cross; for as we were free by the Cross—so Paul says—thus raising this standard, which seems to me the refreshment of Christians, we shall be freed—we from our wars and divisions and many sins, the infidel people from their infidelity.

In this way you will come and attain the reformation, giving good priests to Holy Church. Fill her heart with the ardent love that she has lost; for she has been so drained of blood by the iniquitous men who have devoured her that she is wholly wan. But comfort you, and come, father, and no longer make to wait the servants of God, who afflict themselves in desire. And I, poor, miserable woman, can wait no more; living, I seem to die in my pain, seeing God thus reviled. Do not, then, hold off from peace because of the circumstance which has occurred at Bologna, but

come; for I tell you that the fierce wolves will put their heads in your bosom like gentle lambs, and will ask mercy from you, father.

I say no more. I beg you, father, to hear and hark that which Fra Raimondo will say to you, and the other sons with him, who come in the Name of Christ crucified and of me; for they are true servants of God and sons of Holy Church. Pardon, father, my ignorance, and may the love and grief which make me speak excuse me to your benignity. Give me your benediction. Remain in the holy and sweet grace of God. Sweet Jesus, Jesus Love.

CATHERINE'S frankness was all to the good: Gregory read her letters with amazement and awe. Soon the nun appeared at Avignon, sent there by the Florentines to settle peacefully a dispute between them and the Pope. The mission failed, but Catherine stayed on to press her arguments with the Pope, who finally agreed to leave France. And come he did, though it must be remembered—without trying to minimise Catherine's role in the event—that France, fighting a losing fight in the Hundred Years' War, was no longer the safe asylum it had been under the strong monarchy of Philip the Fair. Gregory XI, after more than once deciding to turn back, made his solemn entry into the Eternal City on January 17, 1377, thus putting an end to the Babylonian Captivity of the Church.

So Catherine's immediate object was attained. A year later, Gregory died, worn out by the tumults of Roman life. He had not reformed the Church, he had not pacified Italy—there had been no time. His successor, Urban VI, might have carried through some reforms—evidently he wanted to—if he had been less violent and quarrelsome. He fell out with everyone, and in six months a group of dissident cardinals, encouraged by French gold, set up a rival Pope. So began the Great Schism, during which there simultaneously reigned two, and sometimes three, Popes. It lasted for almost seventy years.

Catherine did not mince words when she heard that all her efforts had been unable to avert a schism. "I have learned," she wrote to Urban,

LETTERS OF CATHERINE OF SIENA

"that those devils in human form have made an election. They have not chosen a Vicar of Christ but an Anti-Christ." Her fulminations continued; so did the schism. Her influence was on the wane when, disappointed and spent, she died at Rome in April, 1380. Eighty-one years later, Catherine was canonised by her fellow townsman, Pius II.

JOAN OF ARC, BEFORE THE BATTLE OF ORLÉANS, COMMANDS THE ENGLISH TO SURRENDER

AN ILLITERATE, seventeen-year-old peasant girl rode to Chinon and changed the history of France. In her native Domrémy, in Lorraine, Jeanne Darc was as adept at milking cows, ploughing, and sewing as she was at seeing visions and hearing "voices"—Saints Catherine, Margaret, and Michael, and even the Archangel Gabriel. Impelled by these "voices", Jeanne had come to the court of the Dauphin Charles with her schemes for driving out the English, then occupying a good part of France, and for conquering the Burgundians, allies of the English.

What manner of maid was she? Voltaire found her a conquering hero with not too many morals; Schiller changed her into a furious romantic, dying on a battlefield; Anatole France saw her as a tool of the medieval Church and of military strategists in Charles' army; Mark Twain sentimentalised her as pure, beautiful, and discreetly maidenly; it was left to Shaw to make her the first modern woman. The safest estimate of her character is that she was a little of each—headstrong, presumptuous, crafty in battle, deeply religious. That she was beautiful, romantic, is fiction; that she was chaste not even her judges doubted.

Considering the condition of France under the slothful and weak-willed Charles VII, it is little wonder that she, a sturdy peasant girl, was listened to. Had not Merlin, the Sibyl, and Bede prophesied such a one? So Jeanne, accompanied by such famous knights as Dunois and Gilles de Rais, later notorious as Bluebeard, set out to raise the siege of Orléans, her first objective. What she did not know was that she was starting a spirit of nationalism and patriotism that would not just drive the English out of France, but would cause France to spread to the Alps.

Rumours spread in advance of the small army of the strange girl, clothed in white, astride a black horse, who carried an axe but conquered by prayers. Villages capitulated without struggle. Before raising the

siege of Orléans, Jeanne dictated a demand for the surrender of the English who were besieging the city—a letter later brought forth at her trial to prove her heresy:

“I am sent here by God the King of Heaven . . .”

✠ JHESUS MARIA ✠

[1429]

KING of England, and you, Duke of Bedford, who call yourself Regent of the realm of France, you William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, John Talbot, and you, Thomas, Lord Scales, who call yourselves lieutenants of the said Bedford—

Submit to the King of Heaven; surrender to the Maid who has been sent by God the keys of all the good cities which you have taken and violated in France. She has come by God's order to restore the royal blood. She is ready to make peace, if you will submit, provided that you quit France and pay for what you have taken. And you, archers, gentlemen, soldiers of whatever rank before Orléans, depart in God's name into your own country; and if you will not, expect soon to see the Maid, who will inflict great damage upon you.

King of England, if you fail to do as I ask, I am a military chieftain and, in whatever place in France I come upon your men, I shall cause them to depart, whether by their will or no; and if they refuse to obey I shall have them killed. I am sent here by God the King of Heaven to meet them body to body and drive them out of the realm of France. But if they will yield I will grant them mercy. And doubt it not, for you shall not have the realm of France from God, the King of Heaven, son of Saint Mary, but it will be held by

Charles, the true heir, for God wishes it and has so revealed to him by the Maid, and he will enter Paris with a noble company.

If you will not believe the tidings sent you from God and the Maid, we shall strike you down in whatever place we find you, and make you such a great "hahay" as has not been seen in France for a thousand years unless you submit to us. And know well that God will lend such strength to the Maid that you will be unable to withstand her and her good soldiers.

You, Duke of Bedford, the Maid begs and requires of you that you do not seek your own destruction. If you consent you will be able to come in her company, thence where the French will perform the noblest deed ever done for Christianity. Answer, if you will make peace in the city of Orléans; and if you refuse, you will remember it to your sorrow.

THE English scoffed and called her a sorceress. But their derision was premature, for Jeanne, with small forces, routed the English. In the words of the Duke of Bedford, this success was "caused of unleyefulle doubt that thei hadde of a Disciple and Lyme of the Feende called the Pucelle [Maid] that used fals Enchauntments and Sorcerie."

Three months afterward, on July 17, 1429, Jeanne had Charles crowned King of France at Rheims. But the coronation proceedings gave the English time to fortify Paris, import more troops, and solidify positions, and when Jeanne once more rode forth it was to defeat. Finally, in May, 1430, she was captured at Compiègne by the Burgundians. Charles VII, with customary treachery, now that he had no further use of her, made no attempt to ransom her. Sold to the English for ten thousand pieces of gold, she was turned over to the Bishop of Beauvais as a heretic and witch.

Before fifty to sixty jurists and theologians, with seventy charges against her—hearing voices, seeing visions, dressing in male attire, putting the sign of the cross and the names of Jesus and Mary on her letters, blasphemy—she was tried. Found guilty of twelve charges, on the scaffold she recanted and signed a deed of abjuration. But a few days later, discovered wearing men's clothes in her cell, she was sentenced to death.

LETTERS OF JOAN OF ARC

On her head a high paper crown with the words "Heretic, Relapsed, Apostate, Idolater", she was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431. They took her charred body out of the flames when her clothes had been burned off, to show that she was really a woman. To prevent her spirit from ever pervading France, they scattered her ashes into the Seine—a useless precaution.

PIUS II TELLS RODRIGO BORGIA THAT A CARDINAL
SHOULD BE ABOVE REPROACH

P IUS II was a man of genius and contradictions. A Sienese of the noble family of the Piccolomini, under his Christian names of Aeneas Sylvius he was for years renowned as a diplomat, scholar, and wit. He wrote an immoral novel in the style of Boccaccio and an even more immoral play in his own style of a seasoned libertine. When he took minor orders in 1446, it was rather because he foresaw his great destiny as a churchman than because he found a cleric's life attractive. He did not trouble to reform. He gave his favours alternately to Pope and Emperor, so that within a decade he found himself a cardinal and a prince of the Holy Roman Empire.

The fortunes of Aeneas Sylvius were bound up with those of Rodrigo Borgia. They were both made cardinals by the latter's uncle, Calixtus III, and when he died in 1458 they intrigued so effectively that Aeneas Sylvius became Pope at the age of fifty-two. Aeneas Sylvius had been a humanist of liberal, almost pagan spirit: Pius II was an uncompromising Christian who banished his old tolerance as soon as he assumed the tiara. The change was so fundamental that within two years after his elevation Pius sent this severe reprimand to Rodrigo Borgia, the former companion of his pleasures :

"... nothing is now talked of . . . but your vanity . . ."

Petriolo, June 11, 1460

DEAR SON:

We have learned that your Worthiness, forgetful of the high office with which you are invested, was present from the seventeenth to the twenty-second hour, four days ago, in the gardens of John de Bichis, where there were several women of Siena, women wholly given over to worldly vanities. Your companion was one of your colleagues whom his years, if not the dignity of his office, ought to have reminded of his duty. We have heard that the dance was indulged in in all wantonness; none of the allurements of love were lacking, and you conducted yourself in a wholly worldly manner. Shame forbids mention of all that took place, for not only the things themselves but their very names are unworthy of your rank. In order that your lust might be all the more unrestrained, the husbands, fathers, brothers, and kinsmen of the young women and girls were not invited to be present. You and a few servants were the leaders and inspirers of this orgy.

It is said that nothing is now talked of in Siena but your vanity, which is the subject of universal ridicule. Certain it is that here at the baths, where Churchmen and the laity are very numerous, your name is on everyone's tongue. Our displeasure is beyond words, for your conduct has brought the holy state and office into disgrace; the people will say that they make us rich and great, not that we may live a blameless life, but that we may have means to gratify our passions. This is the reason the princes and the powers despise us and the laity mock us; this is why our own mode of

living is thrown in our face when we reprove others. Contempt is the lot of Christ's vicar because he seems to tolerate these actions.

You, dear son, have charge of the bishopric of Valencia, the most important in Spain; you are a chancellor of the Church, and what renders your conduct all the more reprehensible is the fact that you have a seat among the cardinals, with the Pope, as advisors of the Holy See. We leave it to you whether it is becoming to your dignity to court young women, and to send those whom you love fruits and wine, and during the whole day to give no thought to anything but sensual pleasures. People blame us on your account, and the memory of your blessed uncle, Calixtus, likewise suffers, and many say he did wrong in heaping honours upon you. If you try to excuse yourself on the ground of your youth, I say to you: you are no longer so young as not to see what duties your offices impose upon you.

A cardinal should be above reproach and an example of right living before the eyes of all men, and then we should have just grounds for anger when temporal princes bestow uncomplimentary epithets upon us; when they dispute with us the possession of our property and force us to submit ourselves to their will. Of a truth we inflict these wounds upon ourselves, and we ourselves are the cause of these troubles, since we by our conduct are daily diminishing the authority of the Church. Our punishment for it in this world is dishonour, and in the world to come well-deserved torment.

May, therefore, your good sense place a restraint on these frivolities, and may you never lose sight of your dignity; then people will not call you a vain gallant among men. If this occurs again we shall be compelled to show that it was contrary to our exhortation, and that it caused us great pain; and our censure will not pass over you without causing you to blush. We have always loved you and thought you worthy of our protection as a man of an earnest and modest character. Therefore, conduct yourself henceforth so that we may retain this our opinion of you, and may behold in you only the example of a well-ordered

life. Your years, which are not such as to preclude improvement, permit us to admonish you paternally.

THE reprimand had no effect on Cardinal Borgia, who went on living as sensually as ever. About this time he was described as "handsome, of a pleasant and cheerful countenance, with a sweet and persuasive manner. With a single glance he can fascinate women, and attract them to himself more strongly than a magnet draws iron." Thirty years later, when he became Pope Alexander VI, Borgia was still, despite his sixty years, a magnificent-looking man.

As for Pius II, he failed as signally to reform Christendom as he had his friend Borgia. Aeneas Sylvius, the unscrupulous, carefree opportunist, had been the darling of the gods: the reforming projects of Pius II failed miserably. He became obsessed with the idea of a crusade against the Turks who had swept into Constantinople in 1453. No one was interested, and Pius, with a handful of mercenaries, was about to sail against them when death intervened to save him from another humiliating fiasco.

LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT PLAYS POLONIUS TO
HIS SON

[A LETTER TO GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI]

THE discovery of America by the Spanish Jew Cristóbal Colón was not the only marvel of the year 1492. Seven months before that great event, a precocious lad of sixteen was being formally inducted as a member of the most exclusive of all ecclesiastical groups—the college of cardinals. The lad was Giovanni de' Medici, the second of the three sons of Lorenzo, called by his own and succeeding ages the Magnificent. After taking part in the ceremonies, Giovanni went to his lodgings and found the following letter from his father:

“Be cautious . . .”

[April, 1492]

YOU, and all of us who are interested in your welfare, ought to esteem ourselves highly favoured by Providence, not only for the many honours and benefits bestowed on our house, but more particularly for having conferred upon us, in your person, the greatest dignity we have ever enjoyed. This favour, in itself so important, is rendered still more so by the circumstances with which it is accompanied, and especially by the consideration of your youth and of our situation in the world.

The first thing that I would therefore suggest to you is that you ought to be grateful to God, and continually to recollect that it is not through your merits, your prudence, or your solicitude, that this event has taken place, but through His favour, which you can only repay by a pious, chaste, and exemplary life; and that your obligations to the performance of these duties are so much the greater, as in your early years you have given some reasonable expectation that your riper age may produce such fruits. It would indeed be highly disgraceful, and as contrary to your duty as to my hopes, if, at a time when others display a greater share of reason and adopt a better mode of life, you should forget the precepts of your youth, and forsake the path in which you have hitherto trodden.

Endeavour therefore to alleviate the burthen of your early dignity by the regularity of your life and by your perseverance in those studies which are suitable to your profession. It gave me great satisfaction to learn that, in the course of the past year, you had frequently, of your own accord, gone to communion and confession; nor do I conceive that there is any better way of obtaining the favour of heaven than by habituating yourself to a performance of these and similar duties. This appears to me to be the most suitable and useful advice which, in the first instance, I can possibly give you.

I well know that as you are now to reside at Rome, that sink of all iniquity, the difficulty of conducting yourself by these admonitions will be increased. The influence of example is itself prevalent; but you will probably meet with those who will particularly endeavour to corrupt and incite you to vice; because, as you may yourself perceive, your early attainment to so great a dignity is not observed without envy, and those who could not prevent your receiving that honour will secretly endeavour to diminish it, by inducing you to forfeit the good estimation of the public; thereby precipitating you into that gulf into which they had themselves fallen; in which attempt, the consideration of your youth will give them a confidence of success.

To these difficulties you ought to oppose yourself with the

greater firmness, as there is at present less virtue amongst your brethren of the college. I acknowledge indeed that several of them are good and learned men, whose lives are exemplary, and whom I would recommend to you as patterns of your conduct. By emulating them you will be so much the more known and esteemed, in proportion as your age and the peculiarity of your situation will distinguish you from your colleagues. Avoid, however, as you would Scylla or Charybdis, the imputation of hypocrisy; guard against all ostentation, either in your conduct or your discourse; affect not austerity, nor even appear too serious. This advice you will, I hope, in time understand and practice better than I can express it.

Yet, you are not unacquainted with the great importance of the character which you have to sustain, for you well know that all the Christian world would prosper if the cardinals were what they ought to be; because in such a case there would always be a good Pope, upon which the tranquillity of Christendom so materially depends. Endeavour then to render yourself such, that if all the rest resembled you, we might expect this universal blessing. To give you particular directions as to your behaviour and conversation would be a matter of no small difficulty. I shall therefore only recommend that in your intercourse with the cardinals and other men of rank, your language be unassuming and respectful, guiding yourself, however, by your own reason, and not submitting to be impelled by the passions of others, who, actuated by improper motives, may pervert the use of their reason. Let it satisfy your conscience that your conversation is without intentional offence; and if, through impetuosity of temper, anyone should be offended, as his enmity is without just cause, so it will not be very lasting. On this your first visit to Rome, it will however be more advisable for you to listen to others than to speak much yourself.

You are now devoted to God and the church; on which account you ought to aim at being a good ecclesiastic, and to show that you prefer the honour and state of the church and of the apostolic see to every other consideration. Nor, while you keep this in

view, will it be difficult for you to favour your family and your native place. On the contrary, you should be the link to bind this city closer to the church, and our family with the city; and although it be impossible to foresee what accidents may happen, yet I doubt not but this may be done with equal advantage to all; observing, however, that you are always to prefer the interests of the church.

You are not only the youngest cardinal in the college, but the youngest person that ever was raised to that rank; and you ought therefore to be the most vigilant and unassuming, not giving others occasion to wait for you, either in the chapel, the consistory, or upon deputations. You will soon get a sufficient insight into the manners of your brethren. With those of less respectable character converse not with too much intimacy; not merely on account of the circumstance in itself, but for the sake of public opinion. Converse on general topics with all. On public occasions let your equipage and dress be rather below than above mediocrity. A handsome house and a well-ordered family will be preferable to a great retinue and a splendid residence. Endeavour to live with regularity, and gradually to bring your expenses within those bounds which in a new establishment cannot perhaps be expected. Silk and jewels are not suitable for persons in your station. Your taste will be better shown in the acquisition of a few elegant remains of antiquity, or in the collecting of handsome books, and by your attendants being learned and well bred rather than numerous. Invite others to your house oftener than you receive invitations. Practise neither too frequently.

Let your own food be plain, and take sufficient exercise, for those who wear your habit are soon liable, without great caution, to contract infirmities. The station of a cardinal is not less secure than elevated; on which account those who arrive at it too frequently become negligent, conceiving that their object is attained, and that they can preserve it with little trouble. This idea is often injurious to the life and character of those who entertain it. Be attentive therefore to your conduct, and confide in others too little rather than too much.

There is one rule which I would recommend to your attention in preference to all others: rise early in the morning. This will not only contribute to your health, but will enable you to arrange and expedite the business of the day; and as there are various duties incident to your station, such as the performance of divine service, studying, giving audience, &c., you will find the observance of this admonition productive of the greatest utility.

Another very necessary precaution, particularly on your entrance into public life, is to deliberate every evening on what you may have to perform the following day, that you may not be unprepared for whatever may happen. With respect to your speaking in the consistory, it will be most becoming for you at present to refer the matters in debate to the judgment of His Holiness, alleging as a reason your own youth and inexperience. You will probably be desired to intercede for the favours of the Pope on particular occasions. Be cautious, however, that you trouble him not too often; for his temper leads him to be most liberal to those who weary him least with their solicitations. This you must observe, lest you should give him offence, remembering also at times to converse with him on more agreeable topics; and if you should be obliged to request some kindness from him, let it be done with that modesty and humility which are so pleasing to his disposition. Farewell.

HERE is a letter so abundantly shrewd, cautious, and politic that it might serve as a primer in human relations. Its writer was the most astute of statesmen, the most successful in getting his way through subtle and devious means. Here is one of the central documents of Renaissance statecraft, and Lorenzo the Magnificent is rightly its author.

Now turn to Henry Osborn Taylor's fine paragraph on Lorenzo in his *Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century*: "Lorenzo merits the epithet of superman, from his qualities of temperament, his exceeding energy, and his notable and diverse powers. This most astute and unscrupulous politician sang ballads of his own making in the streets of

his city, equally to please the people and himself. If he ruled his people, he belonged to them, and delighted in them, in their songs, in their fêtes and dances, and in the hot embraces of their daughters. He was reputed as licentious as he was intellectual. The splendid and unbridled festivals, with which he tamed and debauched the Florentines, gave him spontaneous joy."

Could this man have written the letter of counsel to young Cardinal Giovanni? The statecraft we accept, but whence comes the pettifogging note, the hypocritical, the unctuously moralistic? Surely not from Lorenzo, the pagan lord of Florence, whose son, this very Cardinal Giovanni, boasted, on becoming Pope, that God had given the papacy to the Medici for their delight. Surely not. . . .

The explanation is that this letter was written from a sick-bed—a sick-bed that was to become a deathbed. Here the great, untrammelled spirit shrank before an unknown that not even his beloved Plato could convincingly dispossess of terrors. There is a story that in his death agony Lorenzo called for Savonarola, the grim monk of San Marco, and craved absolution. Savonarola asked the Magnificent to believe in the infinite mercy of God, to restore to the people his excess wealth, and to order his heir to restore Florence to the Florentines. To the first two conditions Lorenzo readily agreed, but when the last was requested, he turned his face to the wall and died—a scene Thomas Mann has re-created in his tragic playlet *Fiorenza*.

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI VARIES THE PLEASURES OF HIS
COUNTRY EXILE BY COMPOSING *THE PRINCE*

[A LETTER TO FRANCESCO VETTORI]

IN AUGUST, 1512, the Florentine republic, which had been set up shortly after Lorenzo the Magnificent's death, came to an end when Spanish troops marched in and restored the power of the Medicean princes. Niccolò Machiavelli, who for fourteen years had served the republic in the high office of vice-chancellor, was one of the first casualties. He was thrown into prison, tortured with the rack, and might have been confined indefinitely had not Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici's accession to the papal chair inaugurated a period of clemency toward the foes of his house. Leo X allowed Machiavelli to retire to his farm outside Florence.

Like Thucydides, who had to be retired from active soldiering before he could compose his deathless story of the Peloponnesian War, and like Clarendon, whom the ungrateful Charles II had to send into exile before the creator of his restored majesty could find leisure for his austere chronicle of the Parliamentary wars, Machiavelli had to be broken in order to be made. Had the Medici continued to employ him after their restoration, he might never have found time for writing the works that have gained him immortality.

Machiavelli went into his rural exile in March, 1513. In December of the same year, he wrote the following letter to Francesco Vettori, a Florentine humanist and politician :

*“ . . . I forget all my cares, I know no more
trouble, death loses its terror . . . ”*

December 10, 1513

BY THE way of thanks, I can only describe my life to you and, if you think it fit to exchange with yours, I shall change it willingly. I am in the country, and since my last mishaps I have not spent twenty days in Florence to settle them. I have been bird-snaring: I rise before dawn, dress, and wander off with a bundle of cages on my back, looking like Geta loaded with the volumes of Amphitryon; and I bring home two or at most three pigeons. This is how I spent September; then this sport gave out, much to my regret, mean and outlandish though it is; and what my life now is I shall tell you.

In the morning I rise with the sun and go to a wood that I am having felled, where I spend two hours looking over the work of the previous day and killing time with these woodchoppers who are always in trouble among themselves or with their neighbours. I could tell you many fine things about this wood and the trouble it has cost me with Frosino da Panzano and others who wished to buy my timber. Frosino sent for several piles without notifying me and, when it came to the payment, he wished to hold back ten *lire* which he said I owed him from a card game, four years ago, in the house of Antonio Guicciardini. I would have given him the devil and called the carter a thief, but Giovanni Machiavelli came between us and made peace. While this ill wind was blowing, Battista Guicciardini, Filippo Ginori, Tommaso del Bene, and several other citizens each took a load. . . . I told the others I had no more wood, and they were very much offended, particularly

Battista, who numbers this among the other disasters of Prato.

From the wood I go to a spring, and then to one of my bird traps; I take a book with me, Dante or Petrarch or one of the minor poets, Tibullus or Ovid or such; I read their loves and tender passions and remember my own, and for a time I find joy in such thoughts. Then I take the road to the inn, chat with the passers-by, ask the news of their villages, hear all sorts of things, and note the various tastes and tempers of men. By then it is dinnertime. After I have dined with my family on whatever food my poor farm and meagre patrimony afford, I return to the road-house. There, beside the host, I usually find a butcher, a miller, and two furnace makers, with whom I cheat time for the rest of the day, playing flush or tric-trac, both games which breed infinite disputes and insults, and as we generally fight for a farthing we can be heard shouting as far as San Casciano. And this is how, thick as thieves with these lice, I relieve my brain and forget the malignity of my fate, bearing these bruises to see if, at last, Fate will not take shame.

When evening falls, I go home and enter my study. On the threshold I slip off my day clothes with their mud and dirt, put on my royal and Curial robes, and enter, decently accoutred, the ancient Courts of men of old, where I am welcomed kindly and fed on that fare which is mine alone, and for which I was born; where I am not ashamed to address them and to ask them the reasons for their actions, and they reply considerately; and for two hours I forget all my cares, I know no more trouble, death loses its terror: I am utterly translated in their company.

And since Dante says that we can never attain knowledge unless we retain what we hear, I have noted down the capital I have accumulated from their conversation and composed a little book, *De principatibus*, in which I probe as deeply as I can the consideration of this subject, discussing what a principality is, the varieties of such states, how they are won, how they are held, how they are lost; and if any of my fancies ever pleased you, this one should not displease you; and to a prince, and particularly to a new prince, it should be acceptable; and for this reason I have dedicated it to

the Magnifico Giuliano. Filippo Casavecchia has seen it; he will tell you something of its contents and of our conversations, though I am still enlarging and polishing it.

You would have me, my honoured ambassador, leave this life and come and enjoy yours. I shall do so, you may be sure; but for the moment I have some business which will detain me another six weeks. What makes me hesitate is that the Soderini are in Rome, and if I come I shall be obliged to visit them. I should not be surprised if I alighted in jail on my return, instead of at my own door; though this state is very firmly established, still it is new, and being new it is suspicious, and there are plenty of pedants who, as Pagolo Bertini says, would invite others in to dinner and leave me in the cold. If you can settle this apprehension, I shall certainly come in six weeks.

I have discussed my little book with Filippo and asked him whether or not to present it; and, if I should present it, whether I ought to bring it myself or send it to you. Without recommendation I doubt whether Giuliano would even read it, and his Ardinghelli might take the credit for this latest labour of mine. But present it I must, for necessity hounds me, I cannot remain like this without becoming importunate in my poverty. Besides, there is my desire to be employed by these Signori Medici, even if only in rolling a stone; if I did not win their confidence I should not think much of myself. They have only to read this little book to see that the fifteen years I have spent studying statecraft have not been spent sleeping or idling; and anyone might welcome the service of a man who has won his experience at the expense of others. My loyalty they should not doubt; I have always been loyal, and it is not now that I would begin to break faith; a man who has been good and faithful for forty-three years, as I have been, cannot change his nature; and the proof of my goodness and faith is my poverty. I wish you would write me what you think of these things. *Sis felix.*

SO, ALMOST casually, did the supreme theorist of modern statecraft announce the writing of his epochal treatise, *The Prince*—one of the most misconstrued works of all time. In the four hundred years that have elapsed since its writing its use has been turned progressively into abuse. Suffice it to say that it is the textbook of Mussolini and Hitler. The company he has kept in recent years has therefore cast upon Machiavelli an obloquy he does not wholly deserve.

For *The Prince* must be judged within the framework of its times. While its confessedly pagan author flung down "the boldest and rudest challenge of the specific ideology of Christianity that has ever been issued" and advanced the idea of the modern non-moral state whose only law is expediency, its first motive was patriotic. It was a desperate invitation for a strong ruler to rescue Italy from its fatal pluralism, its folly of internecine strife. It was the book of an Italian, proud of the cultural glories of his land, crying for an Italy united by whatever means against the barbarians—the French and Spaniards chiefly—who were descending upon it. His call was not to be answered effectively for three hundred and fifty years, when the incorrigible oppression of Austria and the forces of intellectual darkness enlisted on her side roused Italy to rebellion under such differently motivated leaders as Garibaldi the visionary, Cavour the politician, and Mazzini the man of good will.

MARTIN LUTHER DENIES THAT HE IS A HERETIC, BUT
STANDS BY HIS THESES

[A LETTER TO LEO X]

MARTIN LUTHER was a violent, genial man of peasant origins and peasant appetites, many of the incidents of whose life forcibly recall St. Paul, his spiritual ancestor. The conversion, for instance: Paul on the road to Damascus hearing the voice of Jesus is an incident superior in dramatic impact to, not different in kind from, the law student Luther caught in a thunderstorm and suddenly promising Saint Anne to become a monk if he is spared the lightning. Overnight he became a devotee. When he went on a mission to Rome in 1511, it was as a medieval pilgrim. At the city gate he flung himself on the ground, crying: "Hail, sacred Rome! Thrice sacred for the blood of the martyrs shed here."

The libertinism of the city appalled Luther: he stood there in the noon sun of the Renaissance and saw nothing but the vice of the priests. The disillusionment festered and within six years he had become the most formidable of Rome's enemies. In November, 1517, he nailed ninety-five Theses to the door of the university church at Wittenberg: these Luther, by this time professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, directed against the Church's use of indulgences. Luther's position was that the sale of indulgences—as practised then (an important qualification)—was a misuse of the sacrament of absolution. As revenues from their sale were earmarked for Leo X's pet project of the building of St. Peter's, the Pope was not inclined to give in without a struggle.

The following letter from Luther to Leo X is free from the virulence that characterised the correspondent on both sides when the battle gained in violence—as it soon did:

"If I have deserved death, I shall not refuse to die."

[Wittenberg, May 30 (?)] 1518

I HAVE heard a very evil report of myself, Most Blessed Father, by which I understand that certain persons have made my name loathsome to you and yours, saying that I have tried to diminish the power of the keys and the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, and therefore accusing me of being a heretic, an apostate and a traitor, besides branding me with a hundred other calumnious epithets. My ears are horrified and my eyes amazed, but my conscience, sole bulwark of confidence, remains innocent and at peace. . . .

In these latter days a jubilee of papal indulgences began to be preached, and the preachers, thinking everything allowed them under the protection of your name, dared to teach impiety and heresy openly, to the grave scandal and mockery of ecclesiastical powers, totally disregarding the provisions of the Canon Law about the misconduct of officials. . . . They met with great success, the people were sucked dry on false pretences . . . but the oppressors lived on the fat and sweetness of the land. They avoided scandals only by the terror of your name, the threat of the stake, and the brand of heresy . . . if, indeed, this can be called avoiding scandals and not rather exciting schisms and revolt by crass tyranny. . . .

I privately warned some of the dignitaries of the Church. By some the admonition was well received, by others ridiculed, by others treated in various ways, for the terror of your name and the dread of censure are strong. At length, when I could do nothing else, I determined to stop their mad career if only for a moment; I resolved to call their assertions in question. So I pub-

lished some propositions for debate, inviting only the more learned to discuss them with me, as ought to be plain to my opponents from the preface of my *Theses*. Yet, this is the flame with which they seek to set the world on fire! . . .

Now what shall I do? I cannot recall my *Theses* and yet I see that great hatred is kindled against me by their popularity. I come unwillingly before the precarious and divided judgment of the public, I, who am untaught, stupid and destitute of learning, before an age so fertile in literary genius that it would force into a corner even Cicero, no mean follower of fame and popularity in his day.

So in order to fulfil the desire of many and appease my opponents, I am now publishing a little treatise to explain my *Theses*. To protect myself, I publish it under the guardianship of your name and the shadow of your protection. . . .

And now, Most Blessed Father, I cast myself and all my possessions at your feet; raise me up or slay me, summon me hither or thither, approve me or reprove me as you please. I shall recognise your words as the words of Christ, speaking in you. If I have deserved death, I shall not refuse to die. For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; blessed be He forever. Amen. May He always preserve you. Amen.

THE letter was unavailing chiefly because Leo X, who seems to have forgotten his father Lorenzo's counsels of prudence and moral rectitude, either did not comprehend the significance of Luther's opposition or did not believe in its staying power. Intelligent but easy-going, the Pope temporised for several years before excommunicating the rebellious monk in 1521. The move came too late to be effective, but Leo's death the same year spared him the humiliation of seeing in what measure his laziness had accelerated the machinery of the Reformation. To this extent, at least, he was luckier than his father.

ERASMUS REFUSES TO WRITE AGAINST LUTHER AND COUNSELS THE POPE TO CLEAN HOUSE

[A LETTER TO ADRIAN VI]

AT LEO X's death in 1521, after considerable squabbling the cardinals chose as Pope an elderly Dutchman who had been Charles V's tutor. Adrian VI turned out to be a disappointment: he was austere, inflexibly just, and so pedantic that he was derided as a schoolmaster who kept his schoolboys—the cardinals—in order. The joke was chiefly on the cardinals, for Adrian, recognising that the Church needed to be purified, began with reforming the scandals of the papal court. He soon found himself without friends in Rome. Beyond the Alps the situation was almost as bad: good Catholics were forced to consider eccentric a Pope who admitted that Luther was right in demanding reform and who said privately that even a Pope can err in matters of faith.

In his loneliness, Adrian turned to his old schoolmate, Erasmus of Rotterdam, for help. Desperation was in his plea: "Open your mind to me. Speak freely. How are these foul disorders to be cured while there is still time? I am not alarmed for myself. I am not alarmed for the Holy See, frightful as are the perils which menace it. I am distressed for the myriads of souls who are going to perdition. Be swift and silent. Come to me if you can, and come quickly. You shall not be sorry for it."

In short, Adrian confessed himself baffled by the problem of stopping Luther, with whom, apparently, he agreed in all except matters of doctrine. If only Erasmus, the greatest of scholars, the most brilliant of controversialists, would but come to Rome and put his pen at the Pope's service! . . . The invitation was not tempting, for though Erasmus had taken care to ensure his safety by dedicating his Greek Testament to Leo X, the monks were only waiting for an opportunity to get even with the man who, they declared, had brought on all the troubles that assailed the Church. Was not the confusion of Germany the result of

Erasmus, the apostle of illumination, whose own writings had taught Luther that the monks were fair game for satiric shafts?

So, when Adrian VI invited Erasmus to Rome, the great scholar refused—a luckier Daniel—to walk into the den of lions:

“ . . . if you mean to try prisons, lashes, confiscations, stake, and scaffold, you need no help from me.”

Basle, February, 1523

YOUR Holiness requires my advice, and you wish to see me. I would go to you with pleasure if my health allowed. But the road over the Alps is long. The lodgings on the way are dirty and inconvenient. The smell from the stoves is intolerable. The wine is sour and disagrees with me. For all that I would like well to speak with Your Holiness, if it can be made possible. Meanwhile you shall have my honest heart in writing. Your eyes and mine will alone see my letter. If you like it—well. If not, let it be regarded as unwritten.

As to writing against Luther, I have not learning enough. You think my words will have authority. Alas, my popularity, such as I had, is turned to hatred. Once I was Prince of Letters, Star of Germany, Sun of Studies, High Priest of Learning, Champion of a Purer Theology. The note is altered now. One party says I agree with Luther because I do not oppose him. The other finds fault with me because I do oppose him. I did what I could. I advised him to be moderate, and I only made his friends my enemies. At Rome and in Brabant I am called heretic, heresiarch, schismatic. I entirely disagree with Luther. They quote this and that to show we are alike. I could find a hundred passages where St. Paul seems to teach the doctrines which they condemn in

Luther. I did not anticipate what a time was coming. I did, I admit, help to bring it on, but I was always willing to submit what I wrote to the Church. I asked my friends to point out anything which they thought wrong. They found nothing. They encouraged me to persevere; and now they find a scorpion under every stone, and would drive me to rebellion, as they drove Arius and Tertullian.

Those counsel you best who advise gentle measures. The monks—Atlases, as they call themselves, of a tottering Church—estrangle those who would be its supporters. Alas, that I in my old age should have fallen into such a mess, like a mouse into a pitch pot. Your Holiness wishes to set things right, and you say to me, "Come to Rome. Write a book against Luther. Declare war against his party." Come to Rome? Tell a crab to fly. The crab will say, "Give me wings." I say, "Give me back my youth and strength." I beseech you let the poor sheep speak to his shepherd. What good can I do at Rome? It was said in Germany that I was sent for; that I was hurrying to you for a share in the spoils. If I write anything at Rome, it will be thought that I am bribed. If I write temperately, I shall seem trifling. If I copy Luther's style, I shall stir a hornets' nest.

But you ask me what you are to do. Well, some think there is no remedy but force. That is not my opinion; for I think there would be frightful bloodshed. The question is not what heresy deserves, but how to deal with it wisely. Things have gone too far for cautery. Wycliffe and his followers were put down by the English kings; but they were only crushed, not extinguished; and besides, England is one country under a single sovereign. Germany is an aggregate of separate principalities, and I do not see how force is to be applied in Germany. However that be, if you mean to try prisons, lashes, confiscations, stake, and scaffold, you need no help from me. You yourself, I know, are for mild measures; but you have no one about you who cares for anything but himself; and if divines only think of their authority, monks of their luxuries, princes of their politics, and all take the bit between their teeth, what can we expect?

For myself I should say, discover the roots of the disease. Clean out those to begin with. Punish no one. Let what has taken place be regarded as a chastisement sent by Providence, and grant a universal amnesty. If God forgives so many sins, God's vicar may forgive. The magistrates may prevent revolutionary violence. If possible, there should be a check on the printing presses. Then let the world know and see that you mean in earnest to reform the abuses which are justly cried out against, and if Your Holiness desires to know what the roots are to which I refer, send persons whom you can trust to every part of Latin Christendom. Let them consult the wisest men that they can find in the different countries, and you will soon know.

ADRIAN was willing enough to try to root out the evil, but time was not spared him. He reigned for less than two years, and his successor—another Medici—was too busy promoting the fortunes of his family to bother overmuch with reform.

During the rest of his life, Erasmus was constantly beset both by the Catholics and the Lutherans to declare for them. Both sides annoyed him. He deplored Luther's violence but agreed with him about the necessity for reform. He was vexed with the Catholics for trying to drag him into the turmoil, for, as he wrote to a friend, "I would rather work for a month at expounding St. Paul than waste a day in quarrelling." His lifelong creed of toleration and reasonableness is finely expressed in these words to the Archbishop of Mainz:

"I neither approve of Luther nor condemn him. If he is innocent, he ought not to be oppressed by the factions of the wicked; if he is in error, he should be answered, not destroyed. . . . In old times, even a heretic was quietly listened to. If he recanted, he was absolved; if he persisted, he was at worst excommunicated. Now they will have nothing but blood. Not to agree with them is heresy. To know Greek is heresy. Learning, they pretend, has given birth to Luther, though Luther has but little of it. Luther thinks more of the Gospel than scholastic divinity, and that is his crime. This is plain at least: the best men everywhere are those who are least offended with him."

BABER, FIRST OF THE "MOGULS", DESCRIBES THE
FAILURE OF AN ATTEMPT TO POISON HIM

[A LETTER TO A FRIEND]

BABER'S letter to a friend about an attempt to poison him that failed is one of the few documents of this sort extant. In most cases, the poison worked so effectively that the recipient did not live to write about his recovery.

Baber was a somewhat younger contemporary of Leo X. As central Asian lineage went, he was just about as well and fearsomely connected as possible, being descended from Tamerlane in the direct male line and from Genghis Khan in the female. Before his thirty-ninth year his activities as a warrior carried him throughout Turkestan and Afghanistan. Fortune was not always in his favour: he lost his throne more than once and was not infrequently a hunted fugitive. In 1525 he descended into India with what must have been a pitifully small force in view of the grandeur of his designs. Yet, within four years the hero was master of a vast realm that stretched from the Oxus to the Bengal border and from the Himalayas to considerably south of Agra. This tract became the nucleus of the erroneously called Mogul Empire: Baber was a Turk, not a Mongol (Mogul).

Baber could not have had his adventures without making a host of enemies. Many of them tried to revenge themselves in one way or another, and in 1526 a kinswoman of some princeling he had conquered undertook the job of corrupting his cook:

“Our graceless tasters were neglectful . . .”

THE details of the momentous event of Friday the 16th of the first Rabi in the date 933 [December 21, 1526] are as follows:

The ill-omened old woman Ibrahim's mother heard that I ate things from the hands of Hindustanis—the thing being that three of four months earlier, as I had not seen Hindustani dishes, I had ordered Ibrahim's cooks to be brought and out of fifty or sixty had kept four. Of this she heard, sent to Atawa for Ahmad the taster, and, having got him, gave a *tula* of poison, wrapped in a square of paper, into the hand of a slave woman who was to give it to him. That poison Ahmad gave to the Hindustani cooks in our kitchen, promising them four *parganas* if they would get it somehow into the food.

Following the first slave woman, that ill-omened old woman sent a second to see if the first did or did not give the poison she had received to Ahmad. Well was it that Ahmad put the poison not into the cooking pot but on a dish! He did not put it into the pot because I had strictly ordered the tasters to compel any Hindustanis who were present while food was cooking in the pots, to taste that food. Our graceless tasters were neglectful when the food was being dished up. Thin slices of bread were put on a porcelain dish; on these less than half of the paper packet of poison was sprinkled, and over this buttered fritters were laid. It would have been bad if the poison had been strewn on the fritters or thrown into the pot. In his confusion, the man threw the larger half into the fireplace.

On Friday, late after the afternoon prayer, when the cooked meats were set out, I ate a good deal of a dish of hare and also

much fried carrot, took a few mouthfuls of the poisoned Hindustani food without noticing any unpleasant flavour, took also a mouthful or two of dried meat. Then I felt sick. As some dried meat eaten on the previous day had had an unpleasant taste, I thought my nausea due to the dried meat. Again and again my heart rose; after retching two or three times I was near vomiting on the tablecloth. At last I saw it would not do, got up, went retching every moment of the way to the water-closet, and, on reaching it, vomited much. Never had I vomited after food, used not to do so indeed while drinking.

I became suspicious; I had the cooks put in ward and ordered some of the vomit to be given to a dog and the dog to be watched. It was somewhat out-of-sorts near the first watch of the next day; its belly was swollen and however much people threw stones at it and turned it over, it did not get up. In that state it remained till mid-day; it then got up; it did not die. One or two of the braves who also had eaten of that dish vomited a good deal next day; one was in a very bad state. In the end all escaped. "An evil arrived but happily passed on! God gave me new birth! I am coming from that other world; I am born today of my mother; I was sick; I live; through God, I know today the worth of life!"

I ordered Paymaster Sl. Muhammad to watch the cook; when he was taken for torture, he related the above particulars one after another.

Monday being court day, I ordered the grandees and notables, amirs and wazirs, to be present and that those two men and two women should be brought and questioned. They related the particulars of the affair. The taster I had cut in pieces, the cook skinned alive; one of the women I had thrown under an elephant, the other shot with a matchlock. The old woman I had kept under guard; she will meet her doom, the captive of her own act.

On Saturday I drank a bowl of milk, on Sunday 'araq in which stamped clay was dissolved. On Monday I drank milk in which were dissolved stamped clay and the best theriac, a strong purge. As on the first day, Saturday, something very dark like parched bile was voided.

Thanks be to God! no harm has been done. Till now I had not known so well how sweet a thing life can seem! As the line has it, "He who has been near to death knows the worth of life." Spite of myself, I am all upset whenever the dreadful occurrence comes back to my mind. It must have been God's favour gave me life anew; with what words can I thank him?

Although the terror of the occurrence was too great for words, I have written all that happened, with detail and circumstance, because I said to myself, "Don't let their hearts be kept in anxiety!" Thanks be to God! there may be other days yet to see! All has passed off well and for good; have no fear or anxiety in your minds.

DESPITE *his sanguinary way of dealing with his guilty servants, Baber was a man of singular humanity and wide cultivation. A literary critic of the most fastidious taste, he wrote in Persian, the Latin of central Asia, lyrics of great beauty, while in his native Turki he commanded a simple prose style of uncommon vigour and directness. The poisoning letter quoted above comes from his delightful memoirs, the Babur-nama.*

Baber was so fond of his son Humayun that he is said to have given his life for him. He was only forty-seven years old when Humayun came near to death. Yet, he prayed that his son's illness be transferred to him, and from that moment Humayun began to get well while Baber sickened and died.

PIETRO ARETINO SINGS THE JOYS AND BEAUTIES OF
HIS PALACE IN VENICE

[A LETTER TO HIS LANDLORD]

ON MARCH 27, 1527, *Pietro Aretino*, the prince of Renaissance pamphleteers and profligates, arrived in *Venice*. He sought safety in the only city throughout the Italian peninsula where freedom of speech was tolerated. One by one, his places of refuge had become too hot for the unscrupulous master of irony and abuse who lived by selling his pen to those who were afraid not to buy and by blackmailing those who held out. Everyone, from Pope and Emperor down to princelings whom Aretino deigned to honour with his ambiguous attentions, feared him. Often they tried a desperate solution—they put assassins on his trail. Although they had failed to catch up with him, some day they might. For this reason *Venice* beckoned: there his tongue could wag as freely as it wished, and the laws would protect its owner—so long as he did not slander the Most Serene Republic that offered him sanctuary. Aretino was grateful. He came to *Venice* with a large fortune garnered from the purses of princes, and he was willing to spend. He rented a commodious house—a real palazzo—on the Grand Canal. A subsidiary canal gave it a double exposure on the water, and across the way was the fish market. For this impartial observer of high and low life, the house was most strategically located. Surrounded by all the luxuries that *Venice* abundantly afforded, including a succession of beautiful mistresses, Aretino lived at the Palazzo Bollani for almost a quarter of a century.

Aretino loved his house—loved it so well that he wrote a letter to his landlord extolling the beauties of the place and its manifold advantages:

“ . . . *the night music which tickles my ear with
sweet harmonies.*”

[c. 1530]

I SHOULD think it a sin of ingratitude, gentle sir, if I did not repay with praise a part of my debt to the divine site on which your house is built and where I dwell with the utmost pleasure in life, for it is set in a place which neither hither nor thither nor higher nor lower could better. Certainly, whoever built it gave it the most proper and pre-eminent place on the whole Grand Canal, and, as this is the patriarch of all avenues and Venice the Pope of all cities, I may truthfully say that I enjoy the most beautiful street and the most delightful view in the world.

I never go to the window but I see thousands of people and as many gondolas going to market. The *piazze* to my right are the Beccarie and the Pescaria; on the left, the Bridge and the Fondaco dei Tedeschi; while, facing them both, rises the Rialto, crowded with traders. Here I see boats full of grapes, game and birds in the shops, and kitchen gardens on the pavements. Rivers and irrigated fields I no longer care to see, now that I can watch the water at dawn covered with every manner of thing that is in season. It is a joy to study the bearers of this grand plenty of fruits and greens and to watch them dispensing them to the porters who carry them to their stalls.

But all this is nothing to the sight of twenty or twenty-five sail-boats, heaped up with melons like a little island, and the multitude thronging about them to reckon and weigh and smell their beauty. Of the beautiful housewives shining in silks and gold and jewels, and seated proudly under the poop, I will say nothing, lest I slight their pomp. But I will say that I hold my sides when I listen to the

boatmen shouting, jeering, and roaring at those who are rowed by lackeys without scarlet hose.

And what man could hold his water if he saw, as Giulio Camillo and I saw, a boatload of Germans upset in the dead of winter, just as they came out of a tavern? Giulio is a wag and he says that the side door of this house, being dark, narrow, and brutal to climb, is like the terrible name I have made for myself by venting the truth; but he adds: anyone who knows me finds in my pure, frank, and natural friendship the same calm contentment that he feels when he comes out on the portico of my palace and leans on my balcony. Moreover, to add to the delight of my eye, here are the orange groves that gild the base of the Palazzo dei Camerlinghi on one side, and on the other the *rio* and bridge of San Giovanni Grisostomo; and the winter sun cannot rise without saluting my bed, my study, my kitchen, my chambers, and my hall. . . .

In sum, if I could satisfy touch and the other senses as I satisfy sight, the house would be a heaven, for I enjoy every recreation here that can please the eye. Nor must I forget the great gentlemen, both foreign and native, who pass my door, nor my heavenly rapture when the Bucentaur goes by, nor the regattas, nor the festivals which convert the Canal into a continual triumph for my eye, which is lord of all it surveys. And what shall I say of the lights which appear in the evening like scattered stars? Or of the night music which tickles my ear with sweet harmonies? It would be easier to describe your profound judgment in letters and public affairs than to exhaust the delights that I enjoy merely in gazing.

Therefore, if there be any faint breath of talent in the trifles I have written, I owe it to the influence, neither of shadow nor of light nor yet of verdure nor of violets, but to the joy I feel in the airy felicity of your mansion, in which may God grant me to number, in vigour and health, the years a respectable man may hope to live.

ARETINO never wrote a line without a motive, and cynics have suggested that this lovely composition—one of the most lyrical letters ever couched in the liquid Italian tongue—was his way of paying the rent. They suggest that Bollani was supposed to feel honoured because Aretino had chosen his house and to feel repaid merely because the Divine One (Aretino's way of referring to himself) had written for him the best of all real-estate ads. It is not known whether Bollani fell in with Aretino's schemes or not, but it is a fact that in 1551, many years later, the old publicist was evicted for non-payment of rent and had to move to another location on the Grand Canal, where the sights were far less amusing.

Having to leave his beloved house did not make Aretino love Venice any the less. If he could not step out on his balcony and see the brawling in the fish market across the way, at least the full life of the Grand Canal continued to flow past his door. He knew everybody, including Titian, who remained his faithful crony to the end. Evidently the grossly sensual, arrogant face fascinated the painter: he recorded it in four powerful portraits, and even introduced it into other of his pictures.

Aretino's last years were spent, says the proper Venetian historian, Pompeo Molmenti, in "low intrigues", though how this differentiates these last from his other years is not clear. Aretino often declared that he wanted to die of apoplexy, and he is said to have got his wish. Another version makes his death more in keeping with his life: laughing at a filthy joke, he fell off his stool and cracked his sixty-four-year-old skull.

FRANÇOIS RABELAIS SALUTES ERASMUS AS THE INVINCIBLE DEFENDER OF THE TRUTH

DOCTOR RABELAIS *not only wrote a great satire but discovered a new panacea: "There are people in the world who, being much troubled with the toothache, after they had spent their goods upon physicians, without receiving at all any ease of their pain, have found no more ready remedy than to put the said Chronicles [Pantagruel] between two pieces of linen cloth made somewhat hot and so apply them to the place that smarteth."* For Rabelais wrote first to entertain, not to instruct; he is therefore first the humourist and, only second, the humanist.

Rabelais drew his materials for writing both from life and from secondary sources. One of those sources—if, indeed, a torrent can be so called—was Erasmus. Like the great humanist, Rabelais, influenced by the Lutheran revolt, decried the ignorance of the Church and its backward effects on enlightenment and knowledge. He knew only too well the great number of the clergy who could not even read the Vulgate and who forbade the reading of secular literature: when a Franciscan, he had his books confiscated and burned.

Erasmus and Rabelais met only in their correspondence. In 1532, having got a degree in medicine, Rabelais left Montpellier for Lyons, where he became physician to the Hôtel Dieu. He absented himself from the hospital at frequent intervals, to study, to translate medical writings, and to compose *Pantagruel*, and it was not long before they elected a new physician. Either just before or just after (the date is disputed) the publication of *Pantagruel*, Rabelais sent acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Erasmus for all he had meant to him. Considering his borrowings from Erasmus' *Adagia* and *Colloquia* for *Pantagruel* and, later, *Gargantua*, this effusion is by no means mere flattery:

“ . . . I would very willingly call you mother . . . ”

Lyons, November 30, 1532

GEORGE D'ARMAGNAC, the most illustrious Bishop of Rodez, recently sent me the Jewish history of Flavius Josephus, requesting me in the name of our very old friendship that if, by any chance, I came upon a man worthy of confidence who was leaving for there, I should take the first opportunity of forwarding it to you.

That is why it is, most humane of fathers, that I am as it were taking time by the forelock, and am seizing upon this opportunity of letting you know the willingness of heart and the filial piety which I have for you. I have called you father, and I would very willingly call you mother, if you would be indulgent enough to permit it; for just as we daily behold pregnant women nourishing children whom they have never seen as yet, protecting them from all surrounding harm, so you, without having seen my face, without my name being known to you, have still, uninterruptedly, reared and nourished me on your own most chaste breasts of divine doctrine. Accordingly, if I did not make some small repayment to you, to whom I owe all that I am and all that I am worth, I should indeed be the most ungrateful of all the men that ever lived.

Hence it is, I salute you again, most amiable of fathers, the father and ornament of his country, the protector of letters, and the quite invincible defender of the truth. I have lately learned from Hilaire Bertoul, with whom I live on terms of great familiarity, that you are preparing something in the way of an answer to the slanders of Jerome Aleander, which you suspect to have been levelled at you under the fictitious mask of a Scaliger.

On this point, I cannot bear that your mind should remain any longer in suspense, or that you should any longer be in doubt about the matter.

This Scaliger is from Verona, of that exiled family of Scaligers, and an exile himself. And now, this fellow, whom I know well enough, but whom, by Jove! I do not respect for his learning, is playing the physician at Agen. He is a slanderer who, when all is said, is not so ignorant on the score of medicine, but who, so far as anything else is concerned, is as godless a scamp as ever was. I have not yet been able to set eyes on his book, since for some months past no copies of it have been brought down this way, which makes me think that it may have been suppressed by those who, at Paris, would wish you well. See to it that you keep in good health, and live happily.

François Rabelais, physician

THE *doughty old professors of the Sorbonne objected not only to the obscenity of Rabelais' writings but also to his shrewd and all too close satire. More than once he found it expedient to leave France, in spite of the protection of Francis I and of that dean of patronesses, Marguerite of Navarre. This did not stop his pen, however, and until his death in 1553 he carried on the adventures of the mighty Gargantua.*

George Saintsbury, in one sentence, has summed up the man Rabelais: "With an immense erudition representing almost the whole of the knowledge of his time, with an untiring faculty of invention, with the judgment of a philosopher, and the common sense of a man of the world, with an observation that let no characteristic of the time pass unobserved, and with a tenfold portion of the special Gallic gift of good-humoured satire, Rabelais united a height of speculation and depth of insight and a vein of poetical imagination rarely found in any writer, but altogether portentous when taken in conjunction with his other characteristics."

THE TRAGIC HISTORY OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

[A SERIES OF LETTERS]

THE beautiful have a way with history. There is something poignantly appealing to most people—and appalling to many historians—about a lovely wicked lady or a handsome, heroic scoundrel. Even discarding beauty, there is something even more tantalising about great lovers (even if modern psychoanalysts disregard the “great” and substitute “frustrated”). Thus Antony and Cleopatra, rascals of a minor sort, become not sensualists and ineffectual leaders, but tragic lovers. Poppea becomes no longer the scheming villainess, but the redheaded enchantress who died a cruel death by being kicked in the stomach. Who knows, perhaps if Nero had been handsome and rugged, instead of gross, slovenly, bow-legged, he would have come down through history—Suetonius and Petronius included—as “that rogue” and not “that monster”? Napoleon, no handsome cavalier but a devil with women, is well on his way to deification. Catherine the Great, a fat, homely frau, never lacked lovers; what matters the bloodshed during her tyranny? Marie Antoinette, “the wayward girl”, and Madame de Pompadour, “the intellectual”, who knew best how to silence her enemies, are no longer what they seemed to their contemporaries. The list could be carried on indefinitely. . . .

Mary, Queen of Scots, has undergone the glamourising process, too. Despite her accusers, she wins more and more apologists. This *femme fatale*—a roll-call of the persons who met death directly through her would confirm her right to the appellation—is now “tragic” Mary because she was thoroughly human. She knew how to gather friends, how to hold them, how to repay generosity, how to show gratitude—and she was comely. Of late her detractors have sneered at her looks: she was a blowsy, bewigged, masculine, French harlot, they say. Only the last epithet had

been used in *Mary's* time. Her portraits, however, afford visual proof of her attractiveness; besides, her contemporaries always spoke of her beauty. (Although, perhaps, compared to Queen Elizabeth anyone would have been so called.) True, she wore wigs (a common enough practice of the times), but then more than once she fled from her castles, disguised as a man, necessitating the cutting of her hair. Moreover, when she was beheaded she was an old woman (for those days), being forty-four; she suffered almost twenty years' imprisonment and spent her last years in vowing revenge, plotting her restoration on the throne of Scotland, and intriguing for the downfall of her enemies.

Mary's life is a tragedy, however, not her death. For, as a woman of her times, she was no more evil than others, and, as a woman, she was more faithful than most. Indeed, compared to Catherine de 'Medici (whose eldest son, Francis II, was *Mary's* first husband), she looks almost guiltless. *Mary's* pages in Scottish history are no more bloody than the others of that crimson country.

The protagonists in *Mary's* drama are a motley collection of schemers and villains. First, her second husband, Darnley, petulant, indolent, ambitious, who made her life a hell; second, Bothwell, the fierce, passionate, reckless warrior; third, William Maitland of Lethington, "the flower of the wits of Scotland", as Elizabeth called him, who planned Darnley's death and then *Mary's*; fourth, the Earl of Murray, bastard of James V and half-brother of *Mary*, who forced *Mary's* abdication and made himself Regent; fifth, the profligate Earl of Morton, whose retainers found the famous "casket". *Mary* differed from them all in this: she knew the meaning of loyalty.

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, PLOTS WITH BOTHWELL THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND DARNLEY

A FEW months after the christening of the infant destined to become James VI of Scotland, Lord Darnley, Mary's husband and titular King of Scotland, met his death. On the road to Craigmillar Castle, whither Mary was taking her husband after his illness, they stopped at a small royal manor, Kirk o' Field. In Mary's absence, the house blew up. Darnley was found strangled (February, 1567). Mary protested complete ignorance of the crime, though she far from mourned his loss. Legends associated with the murder portray Mary as a deep-dyed villainess and also as a thrifty Scotswoman. Her enemies swore she was among the band of conspirators and, disguised as a man, witnessed her husband's death. Also, it is said that Mary persuaded Darnley to give up his expensive bed and use a cheaper one for their short stay at Kirk o' Field, thus saving the costly piece.

Three months after Darnley's murder, Mary married Bothwell. The story is that Bothwell had intercepted her as she was returning from a visit to her infant son, told her she was in danger, and carried her off to Dunbar Castle. Mary's pleaders say that she was abducted, ravished, and forced to marry Bothwell. The more likely story is that she and Bothwell planned the whole business. Mary is more than a dual character: she is multi-faceted. While extracting money from the Pope on the promise of restoring the Catholic Church in Scotland, she wedded Bothwell in a Protestant ceremony just after he had obtained a Protestant divorce from his wife.

After her marriage, when the nobles rose in revolt, Bothwell and Mary fought them. Defeated, Mary surrendered and Bothwell escaped. During her incarceration in Loch Leven Castle, the Earl of Morton's men discovered a silver casket belonging to her.

No one's life is more inextricably involved in letters than Mary's. No letters in the history of the world have been more controversial. In this

silver casket were letters purporting to have been written by Mary to Bothwell, scheming the removal and death of Darnley. Mary pronounced these so-called "Casket Letters" forgeries. Even Elizabeth herself did not believe in them at first. Eight letters and a series of sonnets (actually verses), all originally in French, comprised the Casket Letters. Just before Darnley's death, Mary wrote "Letter III", whose alleged meaning is that Mary plans to bring her half-brother to Kirk o' Field and provoke a fight that will end in her husband's death:

" . . . keep good watch if the bird leave his cage . . . "

[1567]

I WATCHED later up there [Kirk o' Field] than I would have done, had it not been to draw out what this bearer will tell you: that I find the best matter to excuse your affair that could be offered. I have promised him [Darnley] to bring him [her step-brother] to him [Darnley] tomorrow: if you find it good, put order to it. Now, Sir, I have broken my promise, for you have commanded me not to send or write. Yet I do it not to offend you, and if you knew my dread of giving offence you would not have so many suspicions against me, which, none the less, I cherish, as coming from the thing in the world which I most desire and seek, namely your good grace. Of that my conduct shall assure me, nor shall I ever despair thereof, so long as, according to your promise, you lay bare your heart to me. Otherwise I shall think that my misfortune, and the fair attitude of those [Lady Bothwell] who have not the third part of the loyalty and willing obedience that I bear to you, have gained over me the advantage won by the second love of Jason. Not that I compare you *à un si malheureuse* [sic] nor myself to one so pitiless [as Medea] however much you make me a little like her in what concerns you; but to preserve and guard you for her to whom alone you

belong, if one can appropriate what one gains by honourably, and loyally, and absolutely loving, as I do and will do all my life, come what pain and misery there may. In memory whereof and of all the ills that you have caused me, be mindful of the place near here [Darnley's chamber?]. I do not ask you to keep promise with me tomorrow, but that we meet and that you do not listen to any suspicion you may have without letting me know. And I ask no more of God than that you may know what is in my heart which is yours, and that He preserve you at least during my life, which shall be dear to me only while my life and I are dear to you. I am going to bed, and wish you good night. Let me know early tomorrow how you fare, for I shall be anxious. And keep good watch if the bird leave his cage, or without his mate. Like the turtle I shall abide alone, to lament the absence, however short it may be. What I cannot do, my letter [would do] heartily, if it were not that I fear you are asleep. . . .

ANDREW LANG, the foremost authority on the subject of the *Casket Letters*, says they were not forged. No originals of these letters exist. There are Scots translations of them, Latin translations of the Scots, French translations of the Latin, and other mangled forms. Lang believes it possible that James VI may have got hold of the originals and destroyed them.

The nobles compelled Mary to abdicate in favour of her son, making her half-brother, the Earl of Murray, Regent for the infant King. But within a year Mary escaped from Loch Leven and sped to her supporters. The Regent and his men defeated Mary's forces, and she fled over the border to England, where she was placed in confinement by Elizabeth, her cousin. As Mary wrote: "I have endured injuries, calumnies, imprisonment, famine, cold, heat, flight—not knowing whither, ninety-two miles across the country without stopping or alighting—and then I have had to sleep upon the ground, and drink sour milk, and eat oat-meal without bread, and have been three nights like the owls, without a female in this country, where, to crown all, I am little less than a prisoner."

QUEEN ELIZABETH SENDS HER PORTRAIT AND COMPLIMENTS TO MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, A FEW MONTHS BEFORE HAVING HER BEHEADED

THE jealousy between Elizabeth and Mary has been greatly over-romanticised. Perhaps Elizabeth envied Mary's success with men; she was a woman, too. What really worried Elizabeth was that she had no heir; she feared, therefore, to name her successor. There was still a large Catholic party in England anxious for the return of the Church, and it looked toward Mary, who was a Catholic, as the natural monarch to carry out its plans. For Elizabeth to name Mary her successor would possibly have been to sign her death warrant.

Mary and Elizabeth had often exchanged gifts with one another as mementoes of affection. In fact, just before Mary fled to England, she wrote Elizabeth: "I send back to its Queen this token, the jewel of her promised friendship and assistance"—the heart-shaped diamond Elizabeth had given her "dearest sister".

While Mary was still her prisoner, Elizabeth and she continued their rather elaborate friendship and correspondence, and, almost a year before Elizabeth had her beheaded, she sent Mary her picture and this letter:

"For the face . . . I might well blush to offer . . ."

[1586]

LIKE as the rich man daily gathereth riches to riches, and to one bag of money layeth a great sort till it come to infinite, so methinks, Your Majesty, not being sufficed with many benefits and gentleness showed to me before this time, doth now increase

QUEEN ELIZABETH TO MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

them in asking and desiring where you may bid and command, requiring a thing not worthy the desiring for itself, but made worthy for Your Highness' request. My picture, I mean, in which if the inward good mind toward your grace might as well be declared as the outward face and countenance shall be seen, I would neither have tarried the commandment but prevent it, nor have been the last to grant but the first to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present. For the face, I grant, I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present. For though from the grace of the picture, the colours may fade by time, may give by weather, may be spotted by chance, yet the other neither time with her swift wings shall overtake, nor the misty clouds with their lowerings may darken, nor chance with her slippery foot may overthrow.

Of this although yet the proof could not be great because the occasions hath been but small, notwithstanding as a dog hath a day, so may I perchance have time to declare it in deeds where now I do write them but in words. And further I shall most humbly beseech Your Majesty that when you shall look on my picture you will vouchsafe to think that as you have but the outward shadow of the body before you, so my inward mind wisheth that the body itself were oftener in your presence, howbeit because both my so being I think could do Your Majesty little pleasure though myself great good, and again because I see as yet not the time agreeing thereunto, I shall learn to follow this saying of Horace, *Feras non culpes quod vitari non potest*. And thus I will (troubling Your Majesty, I fear) end with my most humble thanks, beseeching God long to preserve you to his honour, to your comfort, to the realm's profit, and to my joy. From Hatfield this 1 day of May.

Your Majesty's most humble Sister and Servant,
Elizabeth

QUEEN ELIZABETH TELLS JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND THAT
SHE WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS MOTHER'S
"MISERABLE ACCIDENT"

MARY was hardly content to while away her time in confinement. She smouldered with anger, vowing destruction to all who went against her. When her half-brother was murdered—at her instigation, some say—she pensioned his murderer. Many times she planned her escape, only to be foiled by Elizabeth's crafty spies. She sent ciphered letters abroad, plotting a Spanish invasion of England and a general insurrection to re-establish the Catholic Church.

Then came the deed that resulted in her death. With one of her English friends—men always fell victim to her charm—Anthony Babington, she conceived a scheme for murdering Elizabeth and escaping from her prison. The plot was discovered just in time, and Mary was brought to trial at Fotheringhay. She defended herself admirably, declaring the Babington letters—as she did the Casket Letters—forgeries, which they definitely were not. She was convicted of high treason. Elizabeth doubted the legality of trying and convicting a queen, but the direct threat against her life decided her. She signed the death warrant.

Mary took the news calmly and prepared for the end by writing out her legacies to the faithful: she did not forget a friend, no matter how small the favour. While the minister read the service in English, Mary raised her voice in Latin, drowning him with her prayers. When finished, she knelt, bent her head, and received the axe.

The ever-dissembling Elizabeth had signed a pardon, but it arrived too late—probably by intention, as was done frequently in those times. A few days later, Elizabeth sent her version of his mother's death to Mary's son, James VI (Elizabeth was his godmother, having presented him with a golden font at his christening, later melted down for coin by Mary and Bothwell):

“ . . . how innocent I am in this case . . . ”

February 14, 1587

MY DEAR BROTHER:

I would you knew (though not felt) the extreme dolour that overwhelms my mind, for that miserable accident which (far contrary to my meaning) hath befallen. I have now sent this kinsman of mine, whom by now it has pleased you to favour, to instruct you truly of that which is too irksome for my pen to tell you. I beseech you, as God and many more know, how innocent I am in this case: so you will believe me, that if I had bid ought I would have bid by it. I am not so base-minded that fear of any living creature or prince should make me afraid to do that were just; or done, to deny the same. I am not of so base a lineage, nor carry so vile a mind. But, as not to disguise fits not a king, so will I never dissemble my actions, but cause them show even as I meant them. Thus assuring yourself of me, that as I know this was deserved, yet if I had meant it I would never lay it on others' shoulder; no more will I not damnify myself that thought it not. The circumstance it may please you to have of this bearer. And for your part, think you have not in the world a more loving kinswoman, nor a more dear friend than myself; nor any that will watch more carefully to preserve you and your estate. And who shall otherwise persuade you, judge them more partial to others than you. And thus in haste I leave to trouble you: beseeching God to send you a long reign.

Your most assured loving sister and cousin,

Elizab. R.

SWINBURNE summed up Elizabeth and her dealings with Mary: .
"The saving salt of Elizabeth's character, with all its wellnigh
incredible mixture of heroism and egotism, meanness and magnificence,
was simply this, that, overmuch as she loved herself, she did yet love
England better."

JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND COMMENDS QUEEN ELIZABETH'S HONOURABLE BEHAVIOUR

THE Scots were inflamed with anger, and even Mary's enemies decried the presumption of the English Queen to kill the Scottish one. But twenty-one-year-old James VI received Elizabeth's news with some satisfaction. With his mother's death, he was in direct line for the throne of England. He condoned Elizabeth's actions:

“ . . . considering your . . . long professed good will to the defunct . . . ”

[1587]

MADAME AND DEAREST SISTER:

Whereas by your letter and bearer, Robert Carey yore servant and ambassador, you purge yourself of an unhappy fact. As, on the one part, considering your rank and sex, consanguinity and long professed good will to the defunct, together with your many and solemn attestations of your innocence, I dare not wrong you so far as not to judge honourably of your unspotted part therein, so, on the other side, I wish that your honourable behaviour in all times hereafter may fully persuade the whole world of the same. And, as for my part, I look that you will give me at this time such a full satisfaction, in all respects, as shall be a means to strengthen and unite this isle, establish and maintain the true religion, and oblige me to be, as of before I was, your most loving

[unsigned]

JAMES VI TO QUEEN ELIZABETH

This bearer has somewhat to inform you of in my name whom I need not desire you to credit, for you know I love him.

GLORIANA, that "dreadfully painted old woman", that "formidable old fairy", as J. E. V. Crofts designated her in her last years, reigned until 1603. At her death, James VI of Scotland succeeded to her throne, becoming James I of England. Not for a century, however, were the two crowns formally united.

QUEEN ELIZABETH TELLS OFF A PROUD PRELATE

[A LETTER TO DR. RICHARD COX]

HENRY VIII's charge of adultery against his second consort, Anne Boleyn, affected temporarily the status of their daughter Elizabeth's legitimacy. Finally, Henry acknowledged that Elizabeth was his own true child, but that was long after Anne Boleyn's head had been well separated from her body.

Elizabeth was never more her father's daughter than when dealing with the Church that he had founded. She had as little respect for the sanctity of its property as Henry had had for the property of the monasteries. She treated the revenues of the Church of England as her own, and many prelates were utterly subservient to her. Castles, manor houses, and lesser estates belonging to various bishoprics or lesser jurisdictions would be turned over to her favourites as the whim seized her.

In 1573, Sir Christopher Hatton, a goodly-looking man who eventually rose to be Lord Chancellor and, according to Mary of Scots, Elizabeth's paramour, requested Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely, to hand over his London house to him at a nominal rental. The gardens were famous for their roses, saffron crocuses, and strawberries—and Sir Christopher loved strawberries and flowers. The Bishop, who had already had various pieces of property sheared off his domains by the Queen's favourites, refused to vacate. When Hatton appealed to the Queen, she sent the Bishop this scorching note:

“ . . . *I will unfrock you, by God.*”

[1573]

PROUD PRELATE:

You know what you were before I made you what you are now. If you do not immediately comply with my request, I will unfrock you, by God.

Elizabeth

THE Bishop of Ely gave in. There were plenty to applaud his discomfiture, for he was a reformer of the most blue-nosed variety and quite as money-grabbing as any of Elizabeth's courtiers. In 1580, disgusted at his inability to cope with them, he resigned his see and died shortly afterward.

JOHN DONNE MAKES ACCOUNT OF HIS "PLANETARY
AND ERRATIC FORTUNE"

[A LETTER TO SIR HENRY GOODERE]

JOHN DONNE'S *literary fortunes are even more erratic than were his pecuniary fortunes. Extravagantly praised by his contemporaries and those who followed shortly after :*

*Donne, the delight of Phoebus and each Muse,
Who, to thy one, all other brains refuse;
Whose every work of thy most early wit
Came forth example, and remains so yet.*

—BEN JONSON

*A King who ruled as he thought fit
The Universal monarchy of wit.*

—THOMAS CAREW

in the eighteenth century he fell completely out of favour, the bumptious Dr. Johnson lamenting the "metaphysical" poet's doleful effects. Not until the nineteenth century, and then slowly, did he reappear as a great poet :

*Better and truer verse none ever wrote
Than thou, revered and magisterial Donne*

—ROBERT BROWNING

In the twentieth century, he has alternately soared and dipped in esteem, and, in an age of cacophony, his harsh, discordant music has come into its own.

At the age of twelve, the precocious Donne entered Oxford. His father had considerable wealth and so left him free to follow his bent. This bent developed both for women and for poetry. On the word of Ben Jonson, we have it that Donne wrote his best poetry before his twenty-fifth year. Some of this poetry was composed aboard the Repulse, where he served under the Earl of Essex during his expedition to the Azores, even taking part in the capture of Cadiz.

When Donne met Anne More, the niece of his employer, his life changed. They were secretly wedded and, when the news came out, Donne was thrown into prison at the behest of his father-in-law and dismissed from his clerkship. As Donne put it: "John Donne—Anne Donne—un-donne."

The lovers were united and, with the help of friends, somehow managed to keep alive. While living at Mitcham, Donne and his growing family knew what poverty meant. From what he called his "hospital" and "prison", unemployed for years, sick, ill-clad, Donne sent this letter to his courtier friend Sir Henry Goodere:

"I would not that death should take me asleep."

[Mitcham, September 7, 1608]

SIR:

Every Tuesday I make account that I turn a great hour-glass, and consider that a week's life is run out since I writ. But if I ask myself what I have done in the last watch, or would do in the next, I can say nothing; if I say that I have passed it without hurting any, so may the spider in my window. The primitive monks were excusable in their retirings and enclosures of themselves; for even of them every one cultivated his own garden and orchard, that is, his soul and body, by meditation and manufactures; and they ought the world no more since they consumed none of her

sweetness, nor begot others to burden her. But for me, if I were able to husband all my time so thriftily, as not only to wound my soul in any minute by actual sin, but not to rob and cozen her by giving any part to pleasure or business, but bestow it all upon her in meditation, yet even in that I should wound her more and contract another guiltiness. As the eagle were very unnatural if because she is able to do it, she should perch a whole day upon a tree, staring in contemplation of the majesty and glory of the sun, and let her young eaglets starve in the nest.

Two of the most precious things which God hath afforded us here, for the agony and exercise of our sense and spirit, which are a thirst and inhiation after the next life, and a frequency of prayer and meditation in this, are often envenomed and putrified, and stray into a corrupt disease; for as God doth thus occasion, and positively concur to evil, that when a man is purposed to do a great sin, God infuses some good thoughts which make him choose a less sin, or leave out some circumstance which aggravated that; so the devil doth not only suffer but provoke us to some things naturally good, upon condition that we shall omit some other more necessary and more obligatory. And this is his greatest subtlety, because herein we have the deceitful comfort of having done well, and can very hardly spy our error because it is but an insensible omission and no accusing act. With the first of these I have often suspected myself to be overtaken, which is with a desire of the next life; which though I know it is not merely out of a weariness of this, because I had the same desires when I went with the tide, and enjoyed fairer hopes than now; yet I doubt worldly encumbrances have increased it. I would not that death should take me asleep. I would not have him merely seize me, and only declare me to be dead, but win me and overcome me.

When I must shipwreck, I would do it in a sea where mine impotency might have some excuse; not in a sullen weedy lake, where I could not have so much as exercise for my swimming. Therefore I would fain do something, but that I cannot tell what is no wonder. For to choose is to do; but to be no part of any body is to be nothing. At most, the greatest persons are but great

wens and excrescences; men of wit and delightful conversation but as moles for ornament, except they be so incorporated into the body of the world that they contribute something to the sustentation of the whole.

This I made account that I begun early, when I understood the study of our laws; but was diverted by the worst voluptuousness, which is an hydroptic, immoderate desire of human learning and languages—beautiful ornaments to great fortunes; but mine needed an occupation, and a course which I thought I entered well into when I submitted myself to such a service, as I thought might [have] employed those poor advantages which I had.

And there I stumbled too, yet I would try again; for to this hour I am nothing, or so little, that I am scarce subject and argument good enough for one of mine own letters; yet I fear, that doth not ever proceed from a good root, that I am so well content to be less, that is dead. You, sir, are far enough from these descents, your virtue keeps you secure, and your natural disposition to mirth will preserve you; but lose none of these holds, a slip is often as dangerous as a bruise, and though you cannot fall to my lowness, yet in a much less distraction you may meet my sadness; for he is no safer which falls from an high tower into the leads, than he which falls from thence to the ground; make therefore to yourself some mark, and go towards it alegrement. Though I be in such a planetary and erratic fortune that I can do nothing constantly, yet you may find some constancy in my constant advising you to it.

Your hearty true friend,

J. Donne

DONNE'S depression, until his father-in-law became reconciled to the marriage and helped him, produced one of his strangest works, *Biathanatos*—an attempt to show that suicide is not sinful. Gradually Donne roused himself from his torpor and, at the insistence of his friends, continued his writings. Of these people Augustus Jessopp has said: "There is a vein of peculiar tenderness which runs through the expressions in which his friends speak of him, as if he had exercised over their affection for him an unusual and indefinable witchery." James I, who was also a friend, persuaded him to take holy orders, a career for which Donne was fitted, having devoted many years to religious study and pamphleteering. His last secular task was to print a collection of his own poems (no copy of which has been discovered). To Goodere he wrote: "By this occasion I am made rhapsoder of mine own rags . . . for I must do this as a Valediction to the world before I take orders."

From Donne the poet he became Donne the preacher. His sermons, renowned in his day, are gradually creeping back into print. As a preacher, his friend and biographer Izaak Walton says, he was "in earnest, weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them: always reaching to himself, like an angel from a cloud, but in none: carrying some, as St. Paul was to Heaven in holy raptures, and inticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives; here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it; and a virtue so as to make it beloved even by those that lov'd it not; and, all this with a most particular grace and unexpressible addition of comeliness." Finally, Donne became Dean of St. Paul's, and his financial worries were over.

Donne's preoccupation with death, apparent in much of his poetry and sermons, was crystallised in his last sermon, which he called "Death's Duel". From his deathbed he wound a sheet about him and posed for his last picture. This portrait was copied for a statue which was placed in St. Paul's and was practically the only monument to survive the Great Fire of London.

GALILEO OBSERVES MARVELLOUS THINGS IN THE HEAVENS

[A LETTER TO BELISARIO VINTA]

MICHELANGELO, the greatest artist of the age, had but three days to live when, on February 15, 1564, Galileo, destined to be the greatest scientist of his age, was born. Compelled by his father, Vincenzo, one of the noblemen who founded the opera, to study medicine, Galileo deserted it for mathematics and physics. Indeed, so gifted was he that it was not long before he taught and lectured at the University of Pisa. From the famous Leaning Tower he openly provoked both school and church authorities by his audacity in dropping three articles to earth, showing that, contrary to Aristotelian physics, they landed at the same time.

Galileo's next clash with the authorities came when, after constructing his own telescope (he did not invent it), he peered at the heavens. Of his discoveries and his difficulties he wrote to his brother astronomer Kepler: "Kindest Kepler, what peals of laughter you would give forth if you heard with what arguments the foremost philosopher of the University opposed me, in the presence of the Grand Duke, at Pisa, labouring with his logic-chopping argumentations as though they were magical incantations wherewith to banish and spirit away the new planets out of the sky!" Those "new planets" were the satellites of Jupiter. While in Venice, arranging for the publication of his *Siderius Nuncius*, Galileo wrote to Belisario Vinta, secretary to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo II—this Medici would become his patron in a few months—of what he saw with his telescope:

“ . . . the discovery of four new planets . . . ”

[January 30, 1610]

I AM at present staying at Venice for the purpose of getting printed some observations which I have been making on the celestial bodies by means of a telescope which I have, and being infinitely amazed thereat, so do I give infinite thanks to God, who has been pleased to make me the first observer of marvellous things, unrevealed to bygone ages. I had already ascertained that the moon was a body most similar to the earth, and had shown our Most Serene master as much, but imperfectly, not having such an excellent telescope which I now possess, which, besides showing me the moon, has revealed to me a multitude of fixed stars never yet seen; being more than ten times the number of those that can be seen with the unassisted eye. Moreover, I have ascertained what has always been a matter of controversy among philosophers; namely, the nature of the Milky Way.

But the greatest marvel of all is the discovery of four new planets: I have observed their proper motions in relation to themselves and to each other, and wherein they differ from all the other motions of the other stars. And these new planets move round another very great star, in the same way as Venus and Mercury, and peradventure the other known planets, move round the Sun. As soon as my tract is printed, which, as an advertisement, I intend sending to all philosophers and mathematicians, I shall send a copy to the Most Serene Grand Duke, together with an excellent telescope, which will enable him to judge for himself of the truth of these novelties.

FOR writing to his friend Castelli, a Benedictine monk, in support of the heliocentric theory of Copernicus as opposed to the Church-favoured theory of Ptolemy, Galileo found himself before the Inquisition. Cardinal Bellarmine, the foremost theologian of the time, commanded him to relinquish and never again write or speak of his theories that the sun was the centre of the earth and that the earth moved round it—theories that are “foolish, absurd, false in theology, and heretical, because expressly contrary to Holy Scripture.” This Galileo readily promised.

But, in 1632, with the publication of the *Dialogue concerning the Two Great Systems of the World*, he broke his promise. Once again the Inquisition haled him to Rome. In vain did Father Castelli plead before them: “Nothing that can be done can now hinder the earth from revolving.” Seventy years old, broken in health, Galileo, under threat of torture, bent the knee and recanted. Legend has it that, after uttering the words of abjuration, he muttered under his breath: “But it does move!”

Exiled from his family and friends, Galileo was kept under close surveillance, menaced by imprisonment in a dungeon should he expound his views, until almost the end of his life. Milton, the mighty Puritan poet, visited him in Italy in 1638. He found Galileo blind, his greatest work, *Discourses on Two New Sciences*, just published. In the *Areopagitica*, a defence of the freedom of the press, Milton wrote: “I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican Licensers thought.”

Galileo died in 1642; in the same year was born the man who would carry on his great work—Sir Isaac Newton.

DOROTHY OSBORNE ENVISIONS A CONTENTED MARRIAGE WITH HER LOVER

[A LETTER TO SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE]

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE, *Privy Councillor to Charles II and the supervising architect of the Triple Alliance, England's first curb on Louis XIV's insatiable lust for power, was more fortunate in love than in politics.*

In 1648, young William's father, a member of Cromwell's Long Parliament, sent him away from English turmoil into France. On the way he encountered, at an inn on the Isle of Wight, two travellers—a brother and sister—also bound for France. They planned to take ship together, but as they were leaving the inn, Robin Osborne lingered behind and wrote, with a diamond on the windowpane, this sentence from the Bible: "And Hamman was hang'd upon the Gallows he had prepared for Mordecai." Immediately the three young people were seized because one of them had quoted Scripture so pertinently—at that very moment Colonel Robert Hammond, governor of the Isle of Wight, held Charles I as the Parliament's prisoner. Robin Osborne might have lost his head, or at least his liberty, then and there if his sister Dorothy had not stepped up and taken the blame. So Governor Hammond, to prove that a soldier of Parliament could be chivalrous, bowed to her and dismissed the entire party with nothing more fearsome than a smiling rebuke.

Temple was captivated by Dorothy Osborne's ready wit and adroitness. He courted her for seven years, never quite certain that he would be lucky enough to win her. The Temples were Parliamentarians, the Osbornes Cavaliers—in itself enough to make their marital prospects gloomy. Besides, Temple's father thought that William was too good for Dorothy, and Dorothy's father thought that she was too good for William. Once Temple, in mock-merry mood, wagered ten pounds against

Dorothy's fidelity, to be paid him on the day of her marriage to someone else. Finally, in January, 1655, William Temple proved his fidelity by marrying Dorothy Osborne immediately after her recovery from an attack of smallpox that had destroyed her beauty.

The following letter was written just when the lovers felt that they were entitled to consider themselves engaged, though her brother Henry's jealousy of Temple was a barrier to complete happiness:

"Can there be a romancer story than ours . . . ?"

[January 13-15, 1653/4]

SIR:

'Tis but an hour since you went, and I am writing to you already; is not this kind? How do you after your journey; are you not weary; do you not repent that you took it to so little purpose? Well, God forgive me, and you too, you made me tell a great lie. I was fain to say you came only to take your leave before you went abroad; and all this not only to keep quiet, but to keep him from playing the madman; for when he has the least suspicion, he carries it so strangely that all the world takes notice on't, and so often guess at the reason, or else he tells it. Now, do but you judge whether if by mischance he should discover the truth, whether he would not rail most sweetly at me (and with some reason) for abusing him. Yet you helped to do it; a sadness that he discovered at your going away inclined him to believe you were ill satisfied, and made him credit what I said. He is kind now in extremity, and I would be glad to keep him so till a discovery is absolutely necessary. Your going abroad will confirm him much in his belief, and I shall have nothing to torment me in this place but my own doubts and fears.

Here I shall find all the repose I am capable of, and nothing will

disturb my prayers and wishes for your happiness which only can make mine. Your journey cannot be to your disadvantage neither; you must needs be pleased to visit a place you are so much concerned in, and to be a witness yourself of your hopes, though I will believe you need no other inducements to this voyage than my desiring it. I know you love me, and you have no reason to doubt my kindness. Let us both have patience to wait what time and fortune will do for us; they cannot hinder our being perfect friends.

Lord, there were a thousand things I remembered after you were gone that I should have said, and now I am to write not one of them will come into my head. Sure as I live it is not settled yet! Good God! the fears and surprises, the crosses and disorders of that day, 'twas confused enough to be a dream, and I am apt to think sometimes it was no more. But no, I saw you; when I shall do it again, God only knows! Can there be a romancer story than ours would make if the conclusion prove happy? Ah, I dare not hope it; something that I cannot describe draws a cloud over all the light my fancy discovers sometimes, and leaves me so in the dark with all my fears about me that I tremble to think on't. But no more of this sad talk.

Who was that, Mr. Dr. told you I should marry? I cannot imagine for my life; tell me, or I shall think you made it to excuse yourself. Did not you say once you knew where good French tweezers were to be had? Pray send me a pair; they shall cut no love. Before you go I must have a ring from you, too, a plain gold one; if I ever marry it shall be my wedding ring; when I die I'll give it you again. What a dismal story this is you sent me; but who could expect better from a love begun upon such grounds? I cannot pity neither of them, they were both so guilty. Yes, they are the more to be pitied for that.

Here is a note comes to me just now, will you do this service for a fine lady that is my friend; have not I taught her well, she writes better than her mistress? How merry and pleased she is with her marrying because there is a plentiful fortune; otherwise she would not value the man at all. This is the world; would you and I were out of it: for, sure, we were not made to live in it.

Do you remember Arne and the little house there? Shall we go thither? that's next to being out of the world. There we might live like Baucis and Philemon, grow old together in our little cottage, and for our charity to some shipwrecked strangers obtain the blessing of dying both at the same time. How idly I talk; 'tis because the story pleases me—none in Ovid so much. I remember I cried when I read it. Methought they were the perfectest characters of a contented marriage, where piety and love were all their wealth, and in their poverty feasted the gods when rich men shut them out. I am called away,—farewell!

Your faithful

COMMENTING on the Dorothy Osborne revealed in this relatively small hoard of seventy-five letters, Macaulay inserted in his essay on Sir William Temple these appreciative lines, which do a little less than justice to her whom F. L. Lucas has called simply, "The Perfect Letter Writer":

"She really seems to have been a very charming young woman, modest, generous, affectionate, intelligent, and sprightly; a royalist, as was to be expected from her connexions, without any of that political asperity which is as unwomanly as a long beard; religious, and occasionally gliding into a very pretty and endearing sort of preaching, yet not too good to partake of such diversions as London afforded under the melancholy rule of the Puritans, or to giggle a little at a ridiculous sermon from a divine who was thought to be one of the great lights of the assembly at Westminster; with a little turn for coquetry, which was yet perfectly compatible with warm and disinterested attachment, and a little turn for satire, which yet seldom passed the bounds of good. . . . Her own style is very agreeable; nor are her letters at all the worse for some passages in which raillery and tenderness are mixed in a very engaging namby-pamby."

We have little information about Mistress Dorothy after her marriage. She bore many children, most of whom died in infancy, and there seems little doubt that she made Sir William a good wife. But her dream of a

Baucis and Philemon ending to their marriage seems not to have come true. Hester Johnson, the recipient of Swift's famous Journal to Stella, was almost certainly Temple's illegitimate daughter. She was ten years old when Swift, a poor green youth from Dublin, whose mother was distantly related to Lady Dorothy, was received into the Temple establishment as an upper servant. It seems certain that the Dorothy Osborne of the letters would have discarded a natural bitterness and watched with whimsical interest the pretty friendship between Sir William's "ward" and the brilliant, explosive young Anglo-Irishman.

QUEEN CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN, BEFORE RENOUNCING
PROTESTANTISM, DECIDES TO ABDICATE

[A LETTER TO PIERRE CHANUT]

THE daughter of Gustavus Adolphus was like him in but one way: she had a hooked nose, blonde hair, a high forehead, and blue eyes. As a ruler, Christina did her best to plunge Sweden into bankruptcy. Fortunately for the Swedes, she abdicated in time to save them.

At the age of eighteen, she came to the throne after a regency had ruled during her minority. She set out on a programme of lavish spending, capriciousness, creating as many noblemen as she could, and dabbling in the arts and sciences. To her court she invited scholars and artists. Grotius and Descartes came at her request, both of whom she pensioned. Descartes and Christina corresponded through the medium of the French ambassador to Sweden, Pierre Chanut, one of her favourites, the philosopher even discussing the whys and wherefores of love—unusual for him. He did not last long in the harsh northern climate and died shortly after his arrival.

When the estates asked her to marry, Christina absolutely refused. Not for one instant did she ever think of submitting to a man. Instead, she announced her successor and went about her usual dissolute ways.

Secretly Christina had been receiving instructions in the Catholic faith, but openly flaunted her scorn of the Lutheran religion of her people. Matters were in a sad state when Christina solved the whole situation by abdicating at the age of twenty-seven. Deciding to become a convert, she could no longer expect to rule a Protestant people. Some historians have suggested (and, in light of her later life in Rome, with good cause) that she was also tired of her barren kingdom and longed to advertise to the world the example of a queen giving up her throne in the prime of her powers. To her old crony Chanut, Christina explained that she wished to devote herself to study:

"I have possessed without pride, and resign without difficulty."

Westeras, February 28, 1654

I HAVE told you before the reasons which have obliged me to persist in my design of abdicating. You know that this fancy has lasted long with me, and it is only after having pondered on it for eight years that I have determined to carry it out. It is at least five since I informed you of my purpose, and I then saw that it was only your sincere regard and the interest you took in my fortunes that compelled you to oppose me, in spite of the reasons you could not condemn, however keenly you set yourself to dissuade me. It pleased me to see that you found nothing in the thought that was unworthy of me. You know what I told you on this matter, the last time I had the satisfaction of conversing with you about it. In so long a course of time nothing has happened to alter me.

I have determined all my actions with reference to this end, and have brought them to this final point, without hesitating now that I am ready to finish my part, and go behind the curtain. I care not as to the *Plaudite*. I know that the scenes I have played in could not have been composed according to the ordinary dramatic laws. With difficulty will any strong, masculine, or vigorous touches therein please. I leave it to every man to judge it according to his lights; I can deprive no one of his liberty herein, nor would I even if I could.

I know that there are few who will pass a favourable criticism on it, and I am convinced that you will be of those few. The rest are ignorant of my reasons and my humour, since I have never declared myself to anyone except you, and one other friend, whose soul is great and elevated enough to judge it as you do. *Sufficit*

unus, sufficit nullus. I despise the rest, and should do honour to any one of the herd whom I should find ridiculous enough to amuse myself with.

Those who consider this action in the light of common everyday maxims will doubtless condemn it, but I will never take the trouble to make my apology to them. And in the fullness of the leisure which I am preparing for myself, I shall never be idle enough to remember them. I shall pass it in examining my past life and correcting my errors without either astonishment or repentance. What pleasure shall I not find in recollecting that I have joyfully done good to humanity, and punished those that deserved punishment. I shall find consolation in never having made any person guilty who was not so already, and even in having spared those who were.

I have placed the welfare of the State above all other considerations, I have sacrificed all cheerfully to its interests, and have nothing to reproach myself with in its administration. I have possessed without pride, and resign without difficulty. After all this, do not fear for me. I am in safety, and my good is not in Fortune's power: I am happy, whatever occurs:

*Sum tamen, O superi, felix: nullique potestas
Hoc auferre Deo.*

Aye, I am so, more than anyone, and will always be: I have no fear of that Providence of which you speak to me. *Omnia sunt propitia.* Let Providence take it upon itself to settle my fortunes, and I will submit with that respect and resignation which I owe to its decrees: let it leave the direction of my conduct to myself, and I will employ any such faculties as have been granted to me in making myself happy. And I shall be so as long as I am persuaded that I have nothing to fear from God or man. I shall employ all the rest of my life in familiarising myself with these thoughts, in fortifying my soul, and observing from the haven the troubles of those who are tossed about in life by the storms that one suffers therein, for want of having applied their minds to these meditations.

Am I not to be envied in my present condition? Beyond doubt

I should find many enviers if my happiness were known. You love me, however, well enough not to envy me, and I deserve it, since I am honest enough to admit that I have got some of these sentiments from you: I learned them in conversations with you, and I hope to cultivate them some day with you during my leisure. I am certain that you cannot break your word, and will not cease in these altered circumstances to remain my friend, since I am abandoning nothing that is worthy of your regard. I will, in whatever condition I may be found, preserve my friendship for you; and you will see that no changes will ever be able to alter the views in which I glory.

You know all this, and you are doubtless of opinion that the best pledge I can give you of myself is to tell you that I will always be

Christina

THE *Italians later said that Christina gave up the crown of Sweden only to concern herself with the affairs of the whole world. After abdicating, she left Stockholm, wearing male attire and assuming the name of Count Dohna. At Innsbruck she was formally received into the Roman Catholic Church and spent the next few months travelling about. Wherever she went, she caused a furore. The conversion of a Protestant queen was a rare thing indeed. In France, she shocked the gentlemen by her clothes, her husky voice, and her mannish gestures and manners, but delighted the ladies. The courtesan Ninon de l'Enclos, stated the blunt Christina, was the only woman worth knowing in all France.*

Finally Christina made her state entry into Rome. When the pageants and fêtes in her honour had died down, Christina shrewdly sized up the situation and wrote to a friend: "Do not imagine that, though I am in a country which was once the home of the greatest men in the world, it is therefore a land of sages and heroes, or a refuge for ability and virtue. There are statues, obelisks, sumptuous palaces, but there are no men." Then she settled down to do what she very well pleased. Always an admirer of arts and letters, she became a generous patron of poets, musicians, and artists.

LETTERS OF QUEEN CHRISTINA

Her wit was sharp and her intellect keen. When the Pope sent her a huge supply of fine wines, Christina divulged the way she would live in Rome. The Romans, she remarked, knew nothing about war, since they provisioned fortresses before besieging them. With her guards she paraded the streets, ever the queen, dealing out justice as she saw fit. Her scrapes with both Church and secular authorities provided many a laugh for the populace and many a headache for the Pope, the cardinals, and the nobles. If she arrived late at the theatre (for which she had a passion, producing some of the naughtiest comedies in her own palace), and the audience whistled or booed at her for delaying the show, she would whistle or boo right back.

At the age of sixty-two, still as vigorous and high-handed as ever, Christina died. She was buried at St. Peter's, and twenty thousand Masses were said for the repose of the soul of this most eminent convert to Roman Catholicism. She needed them.

SAMUEL PEPYS RECITES THE TERRORS OF THE GREAT PLAGUE

[A LETTER TO LADY ELIZABETH CARTERET]

ON MAY 26, 1703, John Evelyn recorded in his diary: "This day died Mr. Samuel Pepys, a very worthy, industrious and curious person, none in England exceeding him in knowledge of the navy. . . . He was universally beloved, hospitable, generous, learned in many things, skilled in music, a very great cherisher of learned men." This was the picture of Samuel Pepys that lasted till 1825: in that year part of his Diary was published. The Pepys we now know was a man who blacked his wife's eyes, forced young naval officers' wives to submit to him in order that they might collect their husbands' salaries, cheated the Treasury, accepted grafts, and gossiped freely about court life. The Diary, being written in shorthand, was undoubtedly intended for no eyes but his own. With its publication, Pepys became not a record in the Admiralty, but a human being.

During the beginning of the naval war between England and Holland, plague broke out in London. An apothecary who cured people of the plague "by God's blessing upon certain excellent medicines which he hath, as a water, a lozenge, etc.," wrote in 1665 of the spread of the disease: "The winds blowing westward so long together, from before Christmas until July, about seven months, was the cause the plague began first at the west end of the city. . . . Afterwards it gradually insinuated and crept downe . . . into the city. . . . The disease spread not altogether by contagion at first, nor began at only one place, and spread further and further as an eating spreading soare doth all over the body, but fell upon severall places of the city and suburbs like raine."

Pepys, busy with his duties in the Admiralty, provisioning the ships

in the war, was one of the few officials who dared remain in London. If men were willing to face the dangers of war, for the sake of king and country, he remarked, he could stay and face the dangers of disease. In a letter to Lady Elizabeth Carteret, the wife of the treasurer of the navy, Sir George Carteret, who had escaped to the country, Pepys described the havoc in London:

“ . . . little noise but . . . tolling of bells . . . ”

Woolwich, September 4, 1665

DEAR MADAM:

Your Ladyship will not (I hope) imagine I expected to be provoked by letters from you to think of the duty I ought and should long since have paid your Ladyship by mine, had it been fit for me (during my indispensable attendance alone in the city) to have ventured the affrighting you with anything from thence. But now that by the dispatch of the fleet I am at liberty to retire wholly to Woolwich, where I have been purging my inkhorn and papers these six days, your Ladyship shall find no further cause to reproach me my silence. And in amends for what's past, let me conjure you, Madam, to believe that no day hath passed since my last kissing your hands without my most interested wishes for the health and uninterrupted prosperity of your Ladyship and family. . . .

My Lord Sandwich is gone to sea with a noble fleet, in want of nothing but a certainty of meeting the enemy.

My best Lady Sandwich, with the flock at Hinchinbroke, was, by my last letters, very well.

The absence of the Court and emptiness of the city takes away all occasion of news, save only such melancholy stories as would rather sadden than find your Ladyship any divertisement in the

hearing; I having stayed in the city till above 7400 died in one week, and of them above 6000 of the plague, and little noise heard day nor night but tolling of bells; till I could walk Lumberstreet and not meet twenty persons from one end to the other, and not fifty upon the Exchange; till whole families (ten and twelve together) have been swept away; till my very physician, Dr. Burnet, who undertook to secure me against any infection (having survived the month of his own being shut up) died himself of the plague; till the nights (though much lengthened) are grown too short to conceal the burials of those that died the day before, people being thereby constrained to borrow daylight for that service; lastly, till I could find neither meat nor drink safe, the butcheries being everywhere visited, my brewer's house shut up, and my baker with his whole family dead of the plague.

Yet, Madam, through God's blessing and the good humours begot in my attendance upon our late Amours, your poor servant is in a perfect state of health, as well as resolution of employing it as your Ladyship and family shall find work for it.

How Deptford stands your Ladyship is, I doubt not, informed from nearer hands.

Greenwich begins apace to be sickly; but we are by the command of the King, taking all the care we can to prevent its growth; and meeting to that purpose yesterday after sermon with the town officers, many doleful informations were brought us, and among others this which I shall trouble your Ladyship with the telling. Complaint was brought us against one in the town for receiving into his house a child newly brought from an infected house in London. Upon enquiry we found that it was the child of a very able citizen in Gracious Street, who, having lost already all the rest of his children, and himself and wife being shut up and in despair of escaping, implored only the liberty of using means for the saving of this only babe; which with difficulty was allowed, and they suffered to deliver it, stripped naked, out at a window into the arms of a friend, who, shifting it into fresh clothes, conveyed it thus to Greenwich, where, upon this information from Alderman Hooker, we suffer it to remain.

SAMUEL PEPYS TO LADY ELIZABETH CARTERET

This I tell your Ladyship as one instance of the miserable straits our poor neighbours are reduced to.

But, Madam, I'll go no further in this disagreeable discourse, hoping (from the coolness of the last 7 or 8 days) my next may bring you a more welcome accompt of the lessening of the disease; which God say Amen to.

Dear Madam, do me right to my good Lady Slaning in telling her that I have sent and sent again to Mr. Porter's lodging (who is in the country) for an answer to my letter about her Ladyship's business, but am yet unable to give her any accompt of it.

My wife joins with me in ten thousand happy wishes to the young couple, and as many humble services to your Ladyship and them, my Lady Slaning, Lady Scott, and Mr. Sidney, whose return to Scott's-hall (if not burthensome to your Ladyship) will, I am sure, be as full of content to him as it will ever be of joy and honour to me to be esteemed,

Dearest Madam,
Your Ladyships' most affectionate and
obedient servant,
Samuel Pepys

WRITING three days afterward, Evelyn said: "I went all along the city and suburbs from Kent Street to St. James's, a dismal passage, and dangerous to see so many coffins exposed in the streets, now thin of people; the shops shut up, and all in mournful silence, not knowing whose turn might be next." The week after Pepys' letter was the worst week of the Great Plague. Out of the population of 460,000 in London, 8297 people died. The total number of deaths from plague in 1665 totalled almost seventy thousand.

Bishop Burnet, in his famous history, remarks on the Great Plague: ". . . As soon as the war broke out, a most terrible plague broke out in the city of London, that scattered all the inhabitants that were able to remove themselves elsewhere. It broke the trade of the nation, and swept away about an hundred thousand souls; the greatest havock that

any plague had ever made in England. This did dishearten all people : and coming in the very time in which so unjust a war was begun, it had a dreadful appearance. All the king's enemies and the enemies of the monarchy said, here was a manifest character of God's heavy displeasure ; as indeed the ill life the king led, and the viciousness of the whole court, gave but a melancholy prospect. Yet God's ways are not our ways."

ROGER WILLIAMS, IN HIS OLD AGE, EXPATiates ON
TOLERANCE AND THE FOUNDING OF RHODE
ISLAND

[A LETTER TO A FRIEND]

WHILE paddling down the Seekonk River, Roger Williams espied an Indian standing on top of a rock on the bank. "What cheer, netop [friend]?" the Indian hailed him in greeting. Williams continued a short distance up the river and knew that his journey had ended. Shortly after, with a few companions, he founded a new settlement in Rhode Island: "Having of a sense of God's merciful providence unto me called this place Providence, I desired it might be for a shelter for persons distressed for conscience."

Roger Williams had left England in 1630 to find religious freedom in America. It did not take him long to realise that he would not find it in the Massachusetts Colony. First preaching and then teaching, he conflicted with the civil authorities. The civil power of a state, he boldly asserted, had no jurisdiction over the consciences of men. He refused to take civil oaths, for an oath was a religious pledge and the state could not administer it. The king, he said, had no right to give away land in America to the colonists; the land belonged to the Indians and must be bought from them. Freedom of speech being as unknown as freedom of conscience in Massachusetts, Williams was arrested and brought to trial. Convicted, he would not recant and was ordered to be banished from the lands of Massachusetts.

In January, 1636, just escaping capture and despatch to England for trial, he made his way into the wilderness, alone. Joined by some friends, he went to Rhode Island and, after an abortive settlement, paddled down the Seekonk to found his city. True to his dictates, he made friends with the Indians, paid for the land, and received a deed to it,

Providence and, in fact, Rhode Island, which became a Mecca for religious dissenters, were ever in the vanguard of freedom from tyrannies of religion and government.

In 1670, during a dispute with Massachusetts over territory, Williams, then in his sixties, explained to an old friend there his hope for a peaceful outcome of the situation, reaffirming his belief in the opinions that led him to Providence:

*“ . . . these children’s toys of land, meadows, cattell,
government . . . ”*

Providence, June 22, 1670 (*Ut Vulgo*)

MY HONoured DEARE AND ANTIENT FRIEND:

My due respects and earnest desires to God for your eternall peace, &c.

I crave your leave and patience to present you with some few considerations occasioned by the late transactions between your colony and ours. The last yeare you were pleased, in one of your lines to me, to tell me that you longed to see my face once more before you died: I embraced your love, though I feared my old lame bones, and yours, had arrested travelling in this world, and therefore I was and am ready to lay hold on all occasions of writing as I do at present.

The occasion I confesse is sorrowful, because I see yourselves, with others, embarqued in a resolution to invade and despoil your poor countrimen, in a wildernes, and your antient friends of our temporal and soul liberties. . . .

Sir I am not out of hopes but that while your aged eyes and mine are yet in their orbes, and not yet sunck doune into their holes of rottennes, we shall leave our friends and countrimen, our children and relations and this land in peace behind us. To this

end Sir please you with a calme and steadie and a christian hand, to hold the ballance and to weigh these few considerations in much love and due respect presented.

First, when I was unkindly and unchristianly, as I believe, driven from my house and land and wife and children (in the midst of New-England winter, now about 35 yeasors past) at Salem, that ever honoured Governour Mr. Winthrop privately wrote to me to steer my course to Nahigonset-Bay and Indians for many high and heavenly and publike ends, incouraging me from the freenes of the place from any English claims or pattents. I took his prudent motion as an hint and voice from God and waving all other thoughts and motions, I steered my course from Salem (though in winter snow which I feel yet) unto these parts, wherein I may say *Peniel*, that is, I have seene the face of God.

2. I first pitch't, and begun to build and plant at *Secunk*, now Rehoboth, but I received a letter from my antient friend Mr. Winslow, then Governour of Plymmouth, professing his oune and others love and respect to me, yet lovingly advising me, since I was fallen into the edge of their bounds and they were loth to displease the Bay, to remove but to the other side of the water and then he said I had the country free before me and might be as free as themselves and wee should be loving neighbour's togeather. These were the joynt understandings of these two eminently wise and christian Governours and others, in their day, togeather with their counsell and advice as to the freedome and vacancie of this place, which in this respect and many other Providences of the most holy and only wise, I called *Providence*.

3. Sometime after Plymmouth great Sachim (Ousamaquin) upon occasion affirming that Providence was his land and therefore Plymmouth's land and some resenting it, the then prudent and godly Governour Mr. Bradford and others of his godly counsell, answered that if after due examination it should be found true what the barbarian said, yet having, to my loss of a harvest that yeare, been now (though by their gentle advice) as good as banished from Plymmouth as from the Massachusetts; and I had quietly and patiently departed from them, at their motion, to the

place where now I was, I should not be molested and tost up and down againe while they had breath in their bodies; and surely betweene those my friends of the Bay and Plymmouth, I was sorely tost for one fourteen weekes, in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did meane; beside the yearly losse of no small matter in my trading with English and natives, being debarred from Boston, the chiefe mart and port of New England. God knows that many thousand pounds cannot repay the very temporary losses I have sustained. It lies upon the Massachusetts and me, yea and other colonies joining with them to examine, with feare and trembling before the eyes of flaming fire, the true cause of all my sorrows and sufferings. It pleased the Father of spirits to touch many hearts, dear to him, with some relentings; amongst which that great and pious soule Mr. *Winslow* melted, and kindly visited me at Providence and put a piece of gold into the hands of my wife for our supply.

4. When the next yeare after my banishment the Lord drew the bow of the Pequot warr against the country, in which, Sir, the Lord made yoursef, with others, a blessed instrument of peace to all New England. I had my share of service to the whole land in that Pequot busines, inferiour to very few that acted . . .

5. *Consid.* Upon frequent exceptions against Providence men that we had no authoritie for civill government, I went purposely to England and upon my report and petition, the Parliament granted us a charter of government for these parts, so judged vacant on all hands. And upon this the country about us was more friendly, and wrote to us and treated us as an authorised colony; only the differences of our consciences much obstructed. The bounds of this our first charter I (having ocular knowledge of persons, places and transactions) did honestly and conscientiously, as in the holy presence of God, draw up from Pawcatuck river, which I then believed and still doe is free from all English claims and conquests. . . .

6. Some time after the Pequot war and our charter from the Parliament, the government of Massachusetts wrote to mysef (then chief officer in this Colony) of their receaving of a pattent

from the Parliament for these vacant lands, as an addition to the Massachusetts, &c. and thereupon requiring me to exercise no more authorite, &c. for, they wrote, their charter was granted some few weeks before ours. I returned what I beleived righteous and waighly to the hands of my true friend, Mr. *Winthrop*, the first mover of my coming into these parts, and to that answer of mine I never received the least reply; only it is certain that at Mr. Gorton's complaint against the Massachusetts, the Lord High Admiral, President, said openly, in a full meeting of the commissioners, that he knew no other charter for these parts than what Mr. Williams had obtained, and he was sure that charter, which the Massachusetts Englishmen pretended, had never past the table. . . .

8. But the Kings Majestie sending his commissioners, among other his royall purposes, to reconcile the differences of, and to settle the bounds betweene the colonies, yourselves know how the King himself therefore hath given a decision to this controversie. Accordingly the Kings Majesties aforesaid commissioners at Rode —— (where, as a commissioner for this colony, I transacted with them as did also commissioners from Plymouth) they composed a controversie betweene Plymmouth and us and settled the bounds betweene us in which we rest. . . .

10. Alas, Sir, in calme midnight thoughts, what are these leaves and flowers, and smoke and shadows, and dreams of earthly nothings, about which we poore fools and children, as David saith, disquiet ourselves in vain? Alas, what is all the scuffling of this world for but, *come will you smoke it?* What are the contentions and wars of this world about, generally, but for greater dishes and bowls of porridge, of which, if we believe God's spirit in scripture, Esau and Jacob were types? . . .

. . . Besides Sir the matter with us is not about these children's toys of land, meadows, cattell, government &c. But here all over this colonie, a great number of weake and distressed soules, scattered are flying hither from Old and New England, the Most High and only wise hath in his infinite wisdom provided this country and this corner as a shelter for the poor

and persecuted, according to their several perswasions. . . .

Thus Sir, the Kings Majestie . . . hath vouchsafed his royall promise under his hand and broad seal that no person in this Colony shall be molested or questioned for the matters of his conscience to God, so he be loyall and keep the civil peace. Sir, we must part with lands and lives before we part with such a jewell. . . .

Some of yours, as I heard lately, told tales to the Archbishop of Canterbury, viz. that we are a prophane people and do not keep the Sabbath, but some doe plough, &c. But (1) you told him not how we suffer freely all other perswasions, yea the common prayer, which yourselves will not suffer. If you say you will, you confesse you must suffer more, as we doe.

2. You know this is but a colour to your design for, first, you know that all England: It selfe (after the formalitie and superstition of morning and evening prayer) play away their Sabbath. . . .

6. I have offered and doe by these presents to discusse by disputation writing or printing, among other points of differences these three positions; first that forced worship stincks in Gods nostrils. 2ⁿ that it denies Christ Jesus yet to be come, and makes the church yet national, figurative and ceremonial. 3^d That in these flames about religion, as his Majestie his father and grandfather have yielded, there is no other prudent, christian way of preserving peace in the world but by permission of differing consciences. . . .

. . . I know you are both of you hot, I fear myself also, if both desire, in a loving and calm spirit, to enjoy your rights I promise you, with God's help, to help you to them in a fair and sweet and easie way:—My receit will not please you all. If it should so please God to frowne upon us that you should not like it, I can but humbly mourne and say with the Prophet that which must perish, must perish. And as to myself, in endeavouring after yor temporall and spirituall peace, I humbly desire to say, if I perish, I perish—It is but a shadow vanished, a bubble broke, a dreame finish't eternitie will pay for all. . . .

EVER pugnacious, though kindly, Williams, at the outbreak of King Philip's War, gathered together his own band of soldiers to fight the Indians. Too old to go into battle with them—he was seventy—he succeeded valiantly in protecting the women and children at home.

Preacher, scholar, statesman, soldier, author (he wrote a book on the Indian languages and customs that is still reprinted today), to the end of his eighty years Roger Williams remained a "Seeker": there was some truth and good in every religion.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ SPRINGS A SURPRISE ON A COUNTRY COUSIN

[A LETTER TO MONSIEUR DE COULANGES]

ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1875, Edward FitzGerald wrote to a friend: "I have this Summer made the Acquaintance of a great Lady, with whom I have become perfectly intimate, through her Letters, Madame de Sévigné." The acquaintance ripened into one of the most ardent posthumous friendships in the history of literature. Her letters contain "such good Sense, good Feeling, Humour, Love of Books and Country Life, as makes her certainly the Queen of all Letter writers." To FitzGerald she became and remained his "dear Sévigné" or "dear old Sévigné". He was much over sixty when he began to read her but consoled himself with the reflection that it was "well to have such an acquaintance reserved for one's latter years." He echoed Sainte-Beuve's recipe for a lazy summer day: "Lisons tout Madame de Sévigné," but to read all of the fifteen or sixteen hundred letters—many of them of excessive length—in the magnificent edition called *Des Grands Écrivains*, with its two stout volumes of lexicon and album of plates, was a real task for an old gentleman with bad eyes. Almost up to his death dear old "Littlegrange", as he loved to sign himself in innocent pretence that his country house was a snug medieval barony, quoted his dear Sévigné, writing of her with that cosy familiarity which would have been intolerable in anyone else but which seems germane to his own style and personality.*

FitzGerald preferred the letters that Madame de Sévigné wrote from her château in Brittany, for rural nothingnesses appealed to him more than the nothingnesses of the court. Others, including Horace Walpole, have preferred the latter, and for them every tidbit about the high life of the grand siècle is, particularly if retailed by the inimitable Sévigné,

* For a sample of FitzGerald's own letters, see p. 362.

doubly precious. The following, written to her cousin, the Marquis de Coulanges, is a tour de force of her best cumulative manner :

“What glorious matter for talk!”

Paris, Monday, December 15, 1670

I AM going to tell you a thing the most astonishing, the most surprising, the most marvellous, the most miraculous, the most magnificent, the most confounding, the most unheard of, the most singular, the most extraordinary, the most incredible, the most unforeseen, the greatest, the least, the rarest, the most common, the most public, the most private till today, the most brilliant, the most enviable; in short, a thing of which there is but one example in past ages, and that not an exact one neither; a thing that we cannot believe at Paris; how then will it gain credit at Lyons? a thing which makes everybody cry, “Lord, have mercy upon us!” a thing which causes the greatest joy to Madame de Rohan and Madame de Hauterive; a thing, in fine, which is to happen on Sunday next, when those who are present will doubt the evidence of their senses; a thing which, though it is to be done on Sunday, yet perhaps will not be finished on Monday.

I cannot bring myself to tell it you: guess what it is. I give you three times to do it in. What, not a word to throw at a dog? Well then, I find I must tell you. Monsieur de Lauzun is to be married next Sunday at the Louvre, to —, pray guess to whom! I give you four times to do it in, I give you six, I give you a hundred. Says Madame de Coulanges, “It is really very hard to guess: perhaps it is Madame de la Vallière.” Indeed, Madam, it is not. “It is Mademoiselle de Retz, then.” No, nor she neither; you are extremely provincial. “Lord, bless me,” say you, “what stupid wretches we are! it is Mademoiselle de Colbert all the while.”

Nay, now you are still farther from the mark. "Why then it must certainly be Mademoiselle de Créqui." You have it not yet. Well, I find I must tell you at last. He is to be married next Sunday, at the Louvre, with the King's leave, to Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle de— Mademoiselle—guess, pray guess her name: he is to be married to Mademoiselle, the great Mademoiselle; Mademoiselle, daughter of the late Monsieur; Mademoiselle, granddaughter of Henry the Fourth; Mademoiselle d'Eu, Mademoiselle de Dombes, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle d'Orléans, Mademoiselle, the King's cousin-german, Mademoiselle, destined to the Throne, Mademoiselle, the only match in France that was worthy of Monsieur.

What glorious matter for talk! If you should burst forth like a bedlamite, say we have told you a lie, that it is false, that we are making a jest of you, and that a pretty jest it is without wit or invention; in short, if you abuse us, we shall think you quite in the right; for we have done just the same things ourselves. Farewell, you will find by the letters you receive this post, whether we tell you truth or not.

THE poor Grande Mademoiselle had to struggle long and furiously to marry her lover. The wedding was fixed for December 20, 1670, but on the eighteenth Louis XIV placed Comte de Lauzun under arrest, kept him confined for ten years, and had him released only when the Grande Mademoiselle, who was one of the richest women in Europe, turned over a large part of her domains to one of Louis' bastards.

When Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, finally led her dwarfish lover to the altar (for years she had been the pursuer, he the pursued), she was fifty-four and Lauzun fifty. They soon quarrelled. Lauzun had no respect for his wife's superior birth and one day peremptorily commanded her to remove his shoes: "Louise d'Orléans, tire-moi mes bottes." That finished the relationship, and Lauzun was free to indulge his Don Juanish tendencies without restraint. The ugly little man was a mighty breaker of female hearts, and Mary of Modena, James II's

LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

wife, who was one of his few Platonic loves, persuaded Louis XIV to give Lauzun a dukedom. He survived the Grande Mademoiselle, who, in the manner of disappointed women of the times, spent her last years in religious exercises and memoir-writing, for more than thirty years. In 1695 he married for the second time: he was sixty-three, his bride fourteen. Apparently he was active to the last, dying in 1723 at the age of eighty.

Part Two

LETTERS OF NOT SO LONG AGO

[FROM 1704 TO 1886] ·

MARLBOROUGH, AFTER THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM,
RUSHES NEWS TO HIS WIFE

THE love story of John Churchill and Sarah Jennings is one of the most enthralling pages in English history, scarcely ceding superior interest to the military exploits that earned for him his dukedom of Marlborough, his broad lands, and his immortality as one of the brightest ornaments of the reign of Queen Anne.

John Churchill, the once vituperated villain of Macaulay's purple pages on the reigns of James II and William III, has had his character and fame rehabilitated in recent years by Winston Churchill, great descendant of a great ancestor. Yet, even the historian-statesman could not conceal the fact that John Churchill had mounted to fame through the good offices of a mistress whom he had the dangerous good fortune to share with Charles II—Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland. A Villiers born, she was, therefore, John Churchill's second cousin once removed. Still beauteous if slightly over-mature, the Junonian young woman saw and coveted the handsome sixteen-year-old page who served her royal lover's brother, the Duke of York. The beginning of the affair was innocent enough, but before long she was assisting her cousin in ways not demanded by their rather tenuous ties of family. The rhythm was soon established: Charles II paid the Duchess for her favours, and the Duchess paid John Churchill for his. It was "a piece of the world", utterly conventional for the age of the later Stuarts.

John Churchill was faithful to his Duchess until Sarah Jennings appeared at court under the protection of her more lovely sister, Frances. He then began gradually to drift away from the Duchess of Cleveland. He was infatuated with Sarah, but his wooing was slow, almost desultory—there was an ambitious father in the background who wanted a brilliant marriage for his brilliant son. Sarah was quick-tempered and proud, and the fact that John's father thought her a poor match almost wrecked the romance. In 1678, however, all obstacles were laughed at rather than overcome when Colonel Churchill married his Sarah.

Sarah Churchill had a reputation as a vixen, but from the moment of marriage John Churchill was spared her temper. As he rose, not without vicissitudes and setbacks, to the command of the English army, Sarah was ever at his side, whether physically or spiritually, when his duties carried him abroad. When the great combination against Louis XIV was continued by William III's successor, Anne, Sarah, through her friendship with the Queen, helped to see that her husband got the proper support at home while he was fighting against France on the Continent. When his troops roundly trounced the combined armies of France and Bavaria at the tiny Bavarian village of Blenheim, John Churchill sent his first courier to his companion of twenty-six years of wedded happiness :

" . . . a glorious victory."

August 13, 1704

I HAVE not time to say more but to beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know her army has had a glorious victory. Monsieur Tallard and two other Generals are in my coach and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-de-camp Colonel Parke, will give Her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two by another more at large.

Marlborough

CHURCHILL had been Duke of Marlborough for almost two years when his victory at Blenheim established his claim as the greatest captain of the age, not even excepting his friend and companion-in-arms, Prince Eugene of Savoy. He returned to England after Blenheim to receive the thanks of Parliament and was rewarded with the manor of Woodstock and sundry adjacent lands, upon which, in course of time,

the dramatist-architect Vanbrugh erected the cumbrous classical pile known as Blenheim Palace,* much of the cost of which was defrayed by the nation. Late in 1705 the Emperor Joseph rewarded Marlborough's services to the House of Austria with the principality of Mindelheim.

Marlborough's success on the Continent was unvarying for several years. Unfortunately, while he was winning the victories of Ramillies and Oudenarde, at home the Whigs were gradually losing ground to the Tories, who hated them. Worse, Sarah quarrelled with the Queen. At Malplaquet, on September 11, 1709, he was unlucky enough to win only a tactical success. The thousands left dead on this bloody field weakened his position still further, though he managed to pursue the war with considerable success. Returning home after the autumn campaign of 1711, he found the Tories firmly entrenched and the Queen frankly hostile. On December 31, she signed an order depriving her old friend of all his offices.

Anne's ingratitude came near to breaking Marlborough's spirit, and though he was restored to his honours at the accession of the Hanoverian George I in 1714, the remaining eight years of his life were wearisome. He devoted himself chiefly to the management of his enormous fortune, his penny-pinching ways earning him the reputation of a miser. He was buried expensively in the Abbey.

At Marlborough's death in 1722, Sarah became one of the richest women alive. As she had loved John in life, so she cherished his memory after his death. Although she was sixty-two, this still handsome widow did not lack suitors. To the most distinguished of them, Charles Seymour, the "proud" Duke of Somerset, she returned the famous answer: "If I were young and handsome instead of old and faded as I am, and you could lay the empire of the world at my feet, you should never share the heart and hand that once belonged to John, Duke of Marlborough."

* The building of this and similar edifices inspired the epitaph on Vanbrugh's grave: "Lay heavy on him, Earth, for he laid many a heavy load on thee."

QUEEN ANNE GIVES DIRECTIONS FOR HER HUSBAND'S FUNERAL

[A LETTER TO SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH]

QUEENS reigning in their own right brought luck to England. Except Maud, whose title to the throne was in dispute, and Mary Tudor, whose overpublicised loss of Calais was probably a blessing in disguise, England moved from glory to glory under her women rulers. Elizabeth continued with marked success the maritime policy of her father and left a great trading nation to be misgoverned by the Stuarts. Under Victoria the British Empire *de facto* became the British Empire *de jure*: crowned Empress of India in 1876, the Queen lived to see England rise to world pre-eminence in material achievement and, temporarily, in literature.

The reign of Anne came midway between that of Elizabeth and of Victoria and was marked by the formal union of Scotland with England in 1707 and the destruction of the hopes of Louis XIV largely through the victories of Marlborough. In literature, Swift, Pope, Addison, Steele, and a host of lesser writers achieved a perfect prose and a scarcely less perfect poetry of the chillier sort—didactic, satiric, or moral.

Anne, the presiding genius of this England ever trending into a greater greatness, was not a genius. She was a dumpy woman, rather slow in her thinking, extraordinarily convinced of the divine right of kings, and yet endowed with a sizable fund of common sense.

Anne and Sarah Jennings had been childhood friends—long before Sarah could even conceive of the advantages of the intimacy. When Sarah married Churchill, she was scarcely less devoted to the Princess Anne than to her husband, whom she introduced into the Princess' circle. During the latter years of Charles II and the reign of James II, Anne's father, when Anne seemed only a dowdy girl without prospects, the Marlboroughs

cradled her in love and devotion. Under William and Mary, when Anne, though destined to the throne, was neglected and her opinions were treated with contempt, Sarah and John were loyal. When Anne became Queen, both husband and wife received their rewards.

During the first five years of Anne's reign the Churchills were all-powerful. Scarcely a day passed that Anne and Sarah did not see each other or correspond. All barriers, by Anne's wish, were down, except at some state function. "A friend," says Sarah, "was what she most coveted, and for the sake of friendship which she did not disdain to have with me, she was fond even of that quality which she thought belonged to it. She grew uneasy to be treated by me with the form and ceremony due to her rank, nor could she bear from me the sound of words which implied in them distance and superiority. It was this turn of mind which made her one day propose to me, that whenever I should happen to be absent from her, we might in all our letters write ourselves by feigned names, such as would import nothing of distinction of rank between us. Morley and Freeman were the names her fancy hit upon, and she left me to choose which of them I would be called. My frank, open temper naturally led me to pitch upon Freeman, and so the Princess took the other, and from this time Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman began to converse as equals, made so by affection and friendship."

What Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, referred to dated back to 1681. So it continued for over a quarter of a century, when, in 1707, the Duchess was ill advised enough to introduce her cousin into Anne's service. Mrs. Masham rapidly passed through the stages of Sarah's grateful ally, rival, enemy. Finally, in 1708, she had supplanted Sarah in all except the great offices of state the Queen had conferred on her in 1702. Yet, on the death of Anne's sottish but beloved husband, Prince George of Denmark, to whom she had borne children, all of whom except one had been born dead or had died at infancy, Sarah swallowed her pride and helped Anne to meet the ordeal. Momentarily, the old friendship flickered in Anne, and she sent Sarah this poignant note:

“ . . . to carry the prince's dear body . . . ”

St. James's, October 28, 1708

I SCRATCHED twice at dear Mrs. Freeman's door, as soon as Lord Treasurer went from me, in hopes to have spoke one more word to him before he was gone ; but, nobody hearing me, I wrote this, not caring to send what I had to say by word of mouth ; which was, to desire him, that when he sends his orders to Kensington, he would give directions there may be a great many Yeoman of the Guards to carry the prince's dear body, that it may not be let fall, the great stairs being very steep and slippery.

FRIENDSHIP flickered but to die. Sarah could make no headway against Mrs. Masham and in 1711 lost her offices. In later years, when she was writing about the history of her relations with the Queen, she venomously noted that Anne “ate a very good dinner” just after Prince George's death.

JONATHAN SWIFT RALLIES A GREAT PATRON OF LETTERS ON HIS DISINTERESTEDNESS

[A LETTER TO LORD HALIFAX]

MUCH of Jonathan Swift's time, before he finally retired into his deanery in Dublin, was spent seeking preferment. His determination to be rewarded in accordance with his genius was spited, and the ferocity of his writings, particularly after he settled finally in Ireland, can be attributed to a disappointment that began by impairing his noble qualities and ended by sullyng his mind.

His first patron, Sir William Temple, pompous and tetchy in old age, did not recognise Swift's whole worth, though the charges of indifference brought against him do not bear investigation. He introduced Swift to William III and, without exerting himself overmuch, helped his truculent secretary to advance both as churchman and political pamphleteer. In some respects, Temple was the most satisfactory of his patrons. Swift's ambiguous services to the Whigs were acknowledged with a crumb; his yearning for a bishopric might have been gratified by the Tories, but Queen Anne's death, little more than a year after they had given him his Irish deanery, again brought in the Whigs with the Hanoverian dynasty. Swift went to Ireland and languished until his better nature roused him to that magnificent championship of the down-trodden Irish (for whom, however, he had little use) which consumed the energies of the years of sanity that remained to him.

Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, the shrewd financier who inaugurated the Bank of England and the national debt, was one of Swift's Whig patrons. On May 3, 1709, Swift called on Halifax and borrowed a book, with a remark that it was the only favour he had ever received from the Whigs. Promises were made, but Swift was taking no chances and sent Halifax the following letter of measured adulation:

“ . . . you had fifty times more wit than all of us . . . ”

Leicester, June 13, 1709

MY LORD:

Before I leave this place, where ill health has detained me longer than I intended, I thought it my duty to return your Lordship my acknowledgments for all your favours to me while I was in town; and at the same time, to beg some share in your Lordship's memory, and the continuance of your protection. You were pleased to promise me your good offices upon occasion, which I humbly challenge in two particulars; one is, that you will sometimes put my Lord President in mind of me; the other is, that your Lordship will duly once every year wish me removed to England.

In the meantime, I must take leave to reproach your Lordship for a most inhuman piece of cruelty, for I can call your extreme good usage of me no better, since it has taught me to hate the place where I am banished, and raised my thoughts to an imagination, that I might live to be some way useful or entertaining, if I were permitted to live in town, or, which is the highest punishment on Papists, anywhere within ten miles round it. You remember very well, my Lord, how another person of quality in Horace's time, used to serve a sort of fellows who had disoblged him; how he sent them fine clothes, and money, which raised their thoughts and their hopes, till those were worn out and spent; and then they were ten times more miserable than before. *Hac ego si compellar imagine, cuncta resigno.* I could cite several other passages from the same author, to my purpose; and whatever is applied to Maecenas I will not thank your Lordship for accepting; because it is what you have been condemned to these twenty years by every one of us *qui se mêlent d'avoir de l'esprit.*

I have been studying how to be revenged of your Lordship, and have found out the way. They have in Ireland the same idea with us, of your Lordship's generosity, magnificence, wit, judgement, and knowledge in the enjoyment of life. But I shall quickly undeceive them, by letting them plainly know that you have neither interest nor fortune which you can call your own; both having been long made over to the corporation of deserving men in want, who have appointed you their advocate and steward, which the world is pleased to call patron and protector. I shall inform them, that myself and about a dozen others kept the best table in England, to which because we admitted your Lordship in common with us, made you our manager, and sometimes allowed you to bring a friend, therefore ignorant people would needs take you to be the owner. And lastly, that you are the most injudicious person alive, because though you had fifty times more wit than all of us together, you never discover the least value for it, but are perpetually countenancing and encouraging that of others. I could add a great deal more, but shall reserve the rest of my threatenings till further provocation. In the meantime I demand of your Lordship the justice of believing me to be with the greatest respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient and most obliged humble servant,

Jon. Swift

Pray, my Lord, desire Dr. South to die about the fall of the leaf, for he has a prebend of Westminster which will make me your neighbour, and a sinecure in the country both in the Queen's gift, which my friends have often told me would fit me extremely. And forgive me one word, which I know not what extorts from me: that if my Lord President would in such a juncture think me worth laying any weight of his credit [on], you cannot but think me persuaded that it would be a very easy matter to compass; and I have some sort of pretence, since the late King promised me a prebend of Westminster when I petitioned him in pursuance of a recommendation I had from Sir William Temple.

SWIFT refused to continue on promises alone and, as Montagu could be relied upon only for "good words and good dinners", he crossed over to the Tories when the Whig ministry broke up in 1710. It was an unwise move, for on George I's accession, several years later, Halifax became one of the masters of England.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU GOES TO A TURKISH
BATH IN TURKEY

[A LETTER TO A FRIEND]

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU and *Madame de Sévigné* carried on a one-sided feud. To her daughter, the Countess of Bute, Lady Mary wrote: "How many readers and admirers has *Madame de Sévigné*, who gives us, in a lively manner and fashionable phrases, mean sentiments, vulgar prejudices, and endless repetitions? Sometimes the tittle-tattle of a fine lady, sometimes that of an old nurse, always tittle-tattle: yet so well gilt over by airy expressions, and a flowing style, she will always please the same people to whom Lord Bolingbroke will shine as a first-rate author." Lady Mary undoubtedly penned her letters with an eye to publication, and with an eye to outstrip *Madame de Sévigné*, who died when Lady Mary was seven years old: "The last pleasure that fell my way was *Madame de Sévigné's* letters; very pretty they are, but I assert, without the least vanity, that mine will be full as entertaining forty years hence. I advise you, therefore, to put none of them to the use of waste paper."

Whatever her vanity, Lady Mary miscalculated the years; her letters are just as entertaining after two hundred years. As a child, Lady Mary soon attracted attention by her precocity. Corresponding with Edward Wortley Montagu, a man many years her senior, she fell in love. Over her father's objections to the match—her future husband refused to entail his property on any son they might have—she eloped with him. Her life thereafter, after a lapse of a few years, was spent travelling abroad. When her husband was appointed ambassador to Turkey, Lady Mary and their son accompanied him. She found life more agreeable there than in the far from staid England.

Ever a vehement feminist, she observed everything, and, like all

feminists, especially the women she met. In Vienna, she wrote, ". . . the two sects that divide our whole nation of petticoats are utterly unknown. Here are neither coquettes nor prudes. No woman dares appear coquette enough to encourage two lovers at a time. And their husbands . . . look upon their wives' gallants as favourably as men do upon their deputies, that take the troublesome part of their business off their hands . . . in one word, 'tis the established custom for every lady to have two husbands, one that bears the name, and another that performs the duties."

The Frenchwomen did not stack up so well: "I have seen all the beauties, and such—(I can't help making use of the coarse word) nauseous creatures! so fantastically absurd in their dress! so monstrously unnatural in their paints! their hair cut short, and curled round their faces, loaded with powder, that makes it look like white wool! and on their cheeks to their chins, unmercifully laid on, a shining red japan, that glistens in a most flaming manner, that they seem to have no resemblance to human faces."

In Turkey she found her rightful abode. "The Turkish ladies," she wrote, "have at least as much wit and civility, nay, liberty, as ladies among us." "As to their morality or good conduct, I can say, like Harlequin, 'tis just as it is with you; and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians. . . . You may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from a lover's indiscretion, since we see so many that have the courage to expose themselves to that in this world, and all the threatened punishment of the next, which is never preached to the Turkish damsels. . . . Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire."

On her arrival in Turkey, Lady Mary went to see everything she could. One of the first things she did was to visit a Turkish bath:

“ . . . I was at last forced to open my shirt . . . ”

Adrianople, April 1 [(O.S.) 1717]

I AM now got into a new world, where everything I see appears to me a change of scene; and I write to your ladyship with some content of mind, hoping at least that you will find the charm of novelty in my letters, and no longer reproach me, that I tell you nothing extraordinary.

I won't trouble you with a relation of our tedious journey; but I must not omit what I saw remarkable at Sophia, one of the most beautiful towns in the Turkish empire,* and famous for its hot baths, that are resorted to both for diversion and health. I stopped here one day on purpose to see them. Designing to go *incognita*, I hired a Turkish coach. These voitures are not at all like ours, but much more convenient for the country, the heat being so great that glasses would be very troublesome. They are made a good deal in the manner of the Dutch coaches, having wooden lattices painted and gilded; the inside being painted with baskets and nosegays of flowers, intermixed commonly with little poetical mottoes. They are covered all over with scarlet cloth, lined with silk, and very often richly embroidered and fringed. This covering entirely hides the persons in them, but may be thrown back at pleasure, and the ladies peep through the lattices. They hold four people very conveniently, seated on cushions, but not raised.

In one of these covered wagons, I went to the bagnio about ten o'clock. It was already full of women. It is built of stone, in the shape of a dome, with no windows but in the roof, which gives light enough. There were five of these domes joined together,

the outmost being less than the rest, and serving only as a hall, where the portress stood at the door. Ladies of quality generally give this woman the value of a crown or ten shillings; and I did not forget that ceremony. The next room is a very large one paved with marble, and all round it, raised, two sofas of marble, one above another. There were four fountains of cold water in this room, falling first into marble basins, and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose, which carried the streams into the next room, something less than this, with the same sort of marble sofas, but so hot with steams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, it was impossible to stay there with one's clothes on. The two other domes were the hot baths, one of which had cocks of cold water turning into it, to temper it to what degree of warmth the bathers have a mind to.

I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to a stranger. I believe in the whole, there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles, or satiric whispers, that never fail in our assemblies when anybody appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion. They repeated over and over to me, "Uzelle, pék uzelle", which is nothing but Charming, very charming. The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies; and on the second, their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian,—and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses, hanging on their shoulders,



Culver Service

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces.

I was here convinced of the truth of a reflection I had often made, that if it was the fashion to go naked, the face would be hardly observed. I perceived that the ladies with the finest skins and most delicate shapes had the greatest share of my admiration, though their faces were sometimes less beautiful than those of their companions. To tell you the truth, I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Jervas could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improved his art, to see so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions, while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty fancies. In short, it is the women's coffee-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, &c.—They generally take this diversion once a-week, and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediate coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprising to me. The lady that seemed the most considerable among them, entreated me to sit by her, and would fain have undressed me for the bath. I excused myself with some difficulty. They being all so earnest in persuading me, I was at last forced to open my shirt, and shew them my stays; which satisfied them very well, for, I saw, they believed I was so locked up in that machine, that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband.—I was charmed with their civility and beauty, and should have been very glad to pass more time with them; but Mr. W—— [Wortley] resolving to pursue his journey the next morning early, I was in haste to see the ruins of Justinian's church, which did not afford me so agreeable a prospect as I had left, being little more than a heap of stones.

Adieu, madam: I am sure I have now entertained you with an account of such a sight as you never saw in your life, and what no book of travels could inform you of. 'Tis no less than death for a man to be found in one of these places.

WHILE in Turkey, Lady Mary came upon the treatment for small-pox, which was to inoculate the person with the virus and thus give him a mild case of smallpox which would be quickly got over with and would leave no marks. She had her son inoculated, and on her return to England introduced the custom there. This method was used consistently, for the disease was well-nigh universal, until Edward Jenner discovered his method of vaccination. Steele, in tribute, commented upon her "godlike delight" in saving "many thousand British lives every year".

Lady Mary's acid wit and plain common sense gained her not too many friends. Although she managed to stay on good terms with Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough—no mean achievement ("we continue to see one another like two people who are resolved to hate with civility," she wrote)—her quarrel with Alexander Pope became the talk of London. One writer explains that Pope lent the Montagus a pair of sheets which were returned unwashed. Another says that Pope refused to satirise somebody she wanted dragged over the hot coals of his verse. Her granddaughter related that Pope declared his love for Lady Mary, whereupon she went off into gales of laughter. Whatever the cause, the result was a series of references to "Sappho" in his satires, whose implication nobody mistook. On her side, there appeared A Pop upon Pope and another scurrilous attack on the poet, both believed to have come from her pen.

A few years after Pope's satires on her, Lady Mary left England for the Continent. Horace Walpole, who was not above exaggeration, describes her appearance there: "She . . . is laughed at by the whole town. Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob, that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old mazarine blue wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvass petticoat. Her face swelled violently with the remains of a —, partly covered with a plaister, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse, that you would not use it to wash a chimney." When her husband died, who had lived like a miser during his last years, she returned to England and followed him a few months later.

MADAME RETAILS THE INTRIGUES AND SCANDALS OF THE COURT OF LOUIS XV

[A LETTER TO THE RAUGRAVINE LOUISA]

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH of Bavaria, called *Madame* after her marriage to *Monsieur*, Louis XIV's brother, lived at the court of France for half a century. *Monsieur's* first wife, Henrietta of England, had died suddenly, probably poisoned by her husband's coterie of male favourites, Bossuet had pronounced one of his best sermons on the subject of her death, and earnest, sensible, good-natured Charlotte Elizabeth was imported as *Monsieur's* second wife.

It was not the best kind of existence: *Monsieur* allowed *Madame* to provide him with an heir, but he was at heart a homosexual—a situation that *Madame* took in her stride, though in later years she worried, without cause, about her son's proclivities. She could not forget the probable fate of her predecessor. Enemies surrounded her. For years she fought for the privileges of her great station against "the old woman", *Madame de Maintenon*, the King's pious sultana, against *Monsieur's* favourites, against *Monsieur* himself. Louis respected her, and at times she preened herself on her influence. She had almost none, but she survived.

Charlotte Elizabeth endured the meannesses of life under the Sun King by carrying on a vast correspondence with royal relatives throughout Europe. Her sharp tongue and sharp eyes give flavour to the acres of gossip that cleared her pen during her long life, and much of what she says, exclusive of her tiresome harping on her own trials, is amusing and zestful. The following letter to her aunt, written after Louis XIV's death had elevated *Madame's* son Philippe to the regency, is characteristic of the thrifty German princess who will not be persuaded by improved position to sanction the extravagances and debauchery of her son's court:

“ . . . she is in love like a cat . . . ”

October 1st, 1719

THE increase in my pension is very welcome, because after my husband's death I found my means much straitened. The old woman, who detested me as well as my son, pretended that it was the King's express intention to do nothing for me, which was a horrible lie; the proof is that when I hunted out the King and told him that I had not enough to keep up my rank, he immediately increased my pension by 40,000 livres, which made the old woman nearly burst with spite. What amused me was that the Duc and Duchesse du Maine asked my steward how he managed so that I could keep up my rank and not run into debt on the little income I had. Lagarde, for that was my steward's name, replied, "It is because Madame limits herself and never goes in for foolish expenditure." That was a good lesson for the fine couple, because their debts arose from the nocturnal fêtes they used to give at Sceaux, which used to last from the evening till broad daylight, with firework displays, spectacles, operas, feasts, balls—nothing was left out. If my son had not lost his daughter and the King had not received back the wealth she left, I should not have had this increase in my pension, because my son does not wish it said that he enriches his family at the King's expense.

My son is far too soft. When the little Duc de Richelieu said that he had always intended to tell him everything, he believed him and released him, though I must allow with regard to this that the Duc's mistress, Mademoiselle de Charolais, never gave her father a moment's peace. Nevertheless, it is a horrible thing for a Princess of the Blood to declare openly to all the world that

she is in love like a cat, and that the object of her passion is a rascal whose rank is so much below her own that she cannot marry him, and who is, moreover, unfaithful to her, since he has half a dozen other mistresses. When people tell her so she says, "That's all right. He only has mistresses in order to give them away to me, and tell me everything that passes between them and himself." It is truly a horrible affair.

If I believed in magic, I should say that this Duc possesses some supernatural power, because he has never approached a woman who has put up the slightest resistance to him. They all run after him, which is very shameful. He is not, when all is said, handsomer than some others, and he is so indiscreet and boastful that he has himself declared that if an empress, beautiful as an angel, were smitten with him and wished to lie with him, but made it a condition that he should say nothing about it, he would rather leave her on the spot and never set eyes on her again in his life. He is very cowardly and insolent, heartless and soulless. It sickens me to think that he is the darling of so many ladies, and I am convinced that he will repay my son's kindness with ingratitude. But I don't want to talk about this person any longer; he makes me bad-tempered.

The evil they are saying about Monsieur Law and his bank is due to jealousy, because no one could suggest anything better. He pays the late King's dreadful debts and lessens taxation, thus lightening the burden which is weighing down the people. Wood costs only half what it did, and the import duties on wine, meat, and everything consumed in Paris have been abolished. This causes great joy amongst the people, as you can easily imagine. Monsieur Law is very polite. I am greatly taken with him and he does all he can to please me. He refuses to act in secret, as those did who had control of the finances before him, but does everything publicly and honourably. It is quite untrue that he has bought one of the Duchesse de Berri's palaces. She never had one, so it would be impossible for her to sell it. All the residences she had, namely Meudon, Chaville, and La Muette, have been returned to the King, who has lodged his menagerie

at La Muette. There he has cows, sheep, and other animals.

Terrible maladies, such as smallpox, measles, and fiery fever, are doing a great deal of mischief at Paris, but in every corner of Europe nothing else is talked of. They say that there is a plague at Mannheim which is doing a great deal of damage.

THUS *Madame*, as tart at seventy as at twenty, wrote on the eve of John Law's ruin. A year later he was a discredited refugee, and in 1722 *Madame* herself died, soon followed by her son. The *fêtes* at Sceaux continued well into the century. But the "little" Duc de Richelieu, twenty-three years of age in *Madame's* waspish paragraph, lived to be ninety-two, marrying for the third time in his eighty-fifth year and annexing du Barry after the death of Louis XV.

THOMAS GRAY OUTLINES A TRAVEL BOOK THAT HE
NEVER INTENDS TO WRITE

[A LETTER TO THOMAS WHARTON]

AT THE top—or near the top—of any list of the world's best letter writers would appear Thomas Gray. His correspondence—witty, charming, poetic in description, intensely personal, introspective yet full of vigour—differs from that of the Walpoles and the Lady Marys; we see at once the man and sympathise with him. His contemporary, William Cowper, had this to say of him: "I have been reading Gray's Works, and think him the only poet since Shakespeare entitled to the character of sublime. . . . I once thought Swift's letters the best that could be written; but I like Gray's better."

Gray was a strange man, silent, retiring, living his life among people he disliked. His interest reached out eagerly to all knowledge. A friend called him "perhaps the most learned man in Europe". Languages raced through his brain with the ease of jingles; Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and even Icelandic—he became familiar with them all. He knew all history and all historians. "Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study," wrote the same friend. He was a musician, playing the harpsichord with rare delicacy; he was an entomologist, detailing the insects of England; he was a botanist, experimenting with the growth of flowers; he was a zoologist. He was a connoisseur of painting, a student of architecture, a classical scholar, an antiquary, an authority on heraldry and genealogy, an accurate geographer and topographer—and he was a poet. Though his poetry has been debased, given the misnomer of "graveyard school of poetry", decried for becoming too popular, it lives, it inspires, it creates scenes, moods, thoughts, and emotions in a language that is elegiac but not rigidly

classical. The shy Gray, who did not write much poetry "because I cannot", knew his worth :

Tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air :
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun :
Yet shall he mount and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

In 1739, Horace Walpole invited his school chum Gray to accompany him on a tour abroad. Walpole was twenty-one, Gray twenty-two. Thus began the famous series of descriptive letters, from Walpole and Gray to their friends at home, about mountains, rivers, waterfalls, inns, and towns they visited. When they reached Florence, Gray sent his friend, Dr. Thomas Wharton, a mock letter of some experiences on his jaunt that he could, but never would, write a book about :

“the Author dies of the Fright.”

[March, 1740]

Proposals for printing by Subscription, in

THIS LARGE

LETTER

The Travels of T:G:GENT: which will consist of the following Particulars.

CHAP:I:

The author arrives at Dover; his conversation with the Mayor of that Corporation; sets out in the Pacquet-Boat, grows very sick; the Author spews, a very minute account of all the circumstances thereof: his arrival at Calais; how the inhabitants of that country speak French, & are said to be all Papishes; the author's reflexions thereupon.

2.

How they feed him with Soupe, & what Soupe is. how he meets with a Capucin; & what a Capucin is. how they shut him up in a Post-Chaise, & send him to Paris; he goes wondring along dureing 6 days; & how there are Trees, & Houses just as in England. arrives at Paris without knowing it.

3.

Full account of the river Seine, & of the various animals & plants its borders produce. Description of the little Creature called an Abbé, its parts, & their uses; with the reasons, why

they will not live in England, & the methods, that have been used to propagate them there. a Cut of the Inside of a Nunnery; its Structure, wonderfully adapted to the use of the animals, that inhabit it: a short account of them, how they propagate without the help of a Male, & how they eat up their own young ones, like Cats, and Rabbits. supposed to have both Sexes in themselves, like a Snail. Dissection of a Dutchess with Copper-Plates, very curious.

4.

Goes to the Opera; grand Orchestra of Humstrums, Bagpipes, Salt-boxes, Taburs, & Pipes. Anatomy of a French Ear, shewing the formation of it to be entirely different from that of an English one, & that Sounds have a directly contrary effect upon one & the other. Farinelli at Paris said to have a fine manner, but no voice. Grand Ballet, in which there is no seeing the dance for Petticoats. Old Women with flowers, & jewels stuck in the Curls of their grey hair; Red-heel'd Shoes & Roll-ups innumerable, Hoops, & Paniers immeasurable, Paint unspeakable. Tables, wherein is calculated with the utmost exactness, the several Degrees of Red, now in use, from the rising blush of an Advocate's Wife to the flaming Crimson of a Princess of the blood; done by a Limner in great Vogue.

5.

The Author takes unto him a Taylour. his Character. how he covers him with Silk, & Fringe, & widens his figure with buckram a yard on each side; Wastcoat, & Breeches so strait, he can neither breath, nor walk. how the Barber curls him en Bequille, & a la negligee, & ties a vast Solitaire about his Neck; how the Milliner lengthens his ruffles to his finger's ends, & sticks his two arms into a Muff. how he cannot stir, & How they cut him in proportion to his Clothes.

6.

He is carried to Versailles; despised it infinitely. a dissertation upon Taste. goes to an Installation in the Chappel-royal. enter

the King, & 50 Fiddlers Solus. Kettle-Drums, & Trumpets, Queens, & Dauphins, Princesses, & Cardinals, Incense, & the Mass. Old Knights, makeing Curtsies; Holy-Ghosts, & Fiery-tongues.

7.

Goes into the Country to Rheims in Champagne. stays there 3 Months, what he did there (he must beg the reader's pardon, but) he has really forgot.

8.

Proceeds to Lyons. Vastness of the City. Can't see the Streets for houses. how rich it is, & how much it stinks. Poem upon the Confluence of the Rhone, & the Saome, by a friend of the Author's; very pretty!

9.

Makes a journey into Savoy, & in his way visits the Grande Chartreuse; he is set astride upon a Mule's back, & begins to climb up the Mountain. Rocks & Torrents beneath; Pinetrees, & Snows above; horrors, & terroures on all sides. the Author dies of the Fright.

10.

He goes to Geneva. his mortal antipathy to a Presbyterian, & the cure for it. returns to Lyons. gets a surfeit with eating Ortolans, & Lampreys; is advised to go into Italy for the benefit of the air. . . .

11.

Sets out the latter end of November to cross the Alps. he is devoured by a Wolf, & how it is to be devoured by a Wolf. the 7th day he comes to the foot of Mount Cenis. how he is wrap'd up in Bear Skins, & Bever-Skins, Boots on his legs, Caps on his head, Muffs on his hands, & Taffety over his eyes; he is placed on a Bier, & is carried to heaven by the savages blindfold. how he lights among a certain fat nation, call'd Clouds; how they are always in a Sweat, & never speak, but they fart. how they flock

about him, & think him very odd for not doing so too. he falls flump into Italy.

12.

Arrives at Turin; goes to Genoa, & from thence to Placentia; crosses the River Trebia: the Ghost of Hannibal appears to him; & what it, & he, say upon the occasion. locked out of Parma in a cold winter's night: the author by an ingenious stratagem gains admittance. despised that City, & proceeds thro' Reggio to Modena. how the Duke & Dutchess lye over their own Stables, & go every night to a vile Italian Comedy. despised the, & it; & proceeds to Bologna.

13.

Enters into the Dominions of the Pope o' Rome. meets the Devil, & what he says on the occasion. very publick, & scandalous doings between the Vines & the Elm-trees, & how the Olive-trees are shock'd thereupon. Author longs for Bologna-Sausages, & Hams; & how he grows as fat as a Hog.

14.

Observations on Antiquities. the Author proves, that Bologna was the ancient Tarantum; that the Battle of Salamis, contrary to the vulgar opinion, was fought by Land, & that not far from Ravenna. that the Romans were a Colony of the Jews, & that Eneas was the same with Ehud.

15.

Arrival at Florence. is of opinion, that the Venus of Medicis is a modern performance, & that a very indifferent one, & much inferiour to the K: Charles at Chareing-Cross. Account of the City, & Manners of the Inhabitants. a learned Dissertation on the true Situation of Gomorrah. . . .

And here will end the first part of these instructive & entertaining Voyages. the Subscribers are to pay 20 Guineas; 10 down,

& the remainder upon delivery of the book. N:B: A few are printed on the softest Royal Brown Paper for the use of the Curious. . . .

My Dear, dear Wharton

(Which is a dear more than I give anybody else. it is very odd to begin with a Parenthesis, but) You may think me a Beast, for not haveing sooner wrote to you, & to be sure a Beast I am. now when one owns it, I don't see what you have left to say. I take this opportunity to inform you (an opportunity I have had every week this twelvemonth) that I am arrived safe at Calais, & am at present at Florence, a city in Italy in I don't know how many degrees N: latitude. under the Line I am sure it is not, for I am at this instant expiring with Cold. You must know, that not being certain what circumstances of my History would particularly suit your curiosity, & knowing that all I had to say to you would overflow the narrow limits of many a good quire of Paper, I have taken this method of laying before you the contents, that you may pitch upon what you please, & give me your orders accordingly to expatiate thereupon: for I conclude you will write to me; won't you? oh! yes, when you know, that in a week I set out for Rome, & that the Pope is dead, & that I shall be (I should say, God willing; & if nothing extraordinary intervene; & if I'm alive, & well; and in all human probability) at the Coronation of a new one. now as you have no other correspondent there, & as if you do not, I certainly shall not write again (observe my impudence) I take it to be your interest to send me a vast letter, full of all sorts of News, & Bawdy, & Politics, & such other ingredients, as to you shall seem convenient with all decent expedition. only do not be too severe upon the Pretender; & if you like my Style, pray say so. this is a la Francoise; & if you think it a little too foolish, & impertinent; you shall be treated alla Toscana with a thousand Signoria Illustrissima's. in the meantime I have the honour to remain

Your loving Frind tell Deth. T: Gray
Florence. March 12. N:S: [1740]

P:S: This is a l'Angloise. I don't know where you are; if at Cambridge, pray let me know all how, & about it; and if my old friends Thompson, or Clark fall in your way, say I am extremely theirs. but if you are in town, I entreat you to make my best Compliments to Mrs. Wharton, Adieu, Yours Sincerely a second time.

ONE month later, at Reggio, Walpole and Gray quarrelled and split up, Gray continuing to Venice and then back, and Walpole returning home also. What caused the quarrel remains something of a mystery. It seems that Walpole treated the sensitive Gray superciliously, making him conscious of his social inferiority. Walpole is also said to have opened Gray's mail. Four years later, after timid overtures, they resumed their friendship. In fact, Walpole printed much of Gray's poetry on his own press at Strawberry Hill.

Gray sent his most famous poem, *Elegy* written in a Country Churchyard, in a letter to Walpole. Ever the admirer of Gray's poetry, Walpole showed it around, with the result that pirated editions of the *Elegy* came out before Gray had it printed. Walpole was also Gray's staunchest defender. After Gray's death, he did his best to counteract Dr. Johnson's attack on Gray's poetry in *The Lives of the Poets*.* But Dr. Johnson, who believed Savage a great poet, was certainly discredited in short time for his incredible but unique criticisms of poetry. All the profits Gray received from his poetry amounted to forty guineas, and that for his *Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*; as a matter of principle, he let the printer reap the money gains.

When, in 1757, at Colley Cibber's death, he was offered the poet laureateship, Gray refused; his muse was not one that could be dusted off for special occasions. Instead, he continued to stay on at Cambridge, lonely most of the time, but with his studies and, sometimes, outside interferences. Some of the students, knowing his great fear of fire, raised the alarm one night beneath his window. Gray, clad in a night-

* See Horace Walpole's letter to Miss Berry on page 218 for his opinions on Samuel Johnson.

shirt, threw out the rope ladder he kept for just such an eventuality and descended in the darkness. The next thing he knew he was in a tub of water they had placed at the bottom.

Thomas Gray lived till the age of fifty-four, always keeping before him his motto: "To be employed is to be happy." Fanny Burney noted in her Diary: "Mr. Gray, too, the justly and greatly celebrated Gray is dead! How many centuries had he been spared, if Death had been as kind to him, as Fame will be to his works!"

MADAME DE POMPADOUR PROTESTS TO THE POPE THAT SHE IS NOW A GOOD WOMAN

[A LETTER TO BENEDICT XIV]

JOAN FISH was trained to be a king's mistress. *Jeanne Antoinette Poisson*, her father (not her mother's husband) decided, was un *morceau de roi*. With that in mind, he gave her a good education and provided a rich husband, his nephew, *Le Normant d'Étioles*. An old woman prophesied that *Jeanne* would indeed become a king's mistress. Thereupon *Jeanne* started out to find the king. She soon became a leader in fashionable society but had still to meet the king for whom fortune destined her. At last she met *Louis XV* at a ball in 1744, captivated him, promptly gave up her husband, and became the king's *maîtresse en titre*. It was not long before she added one more name, derived from an estate *Louis* had given her. Thus *Joan Fish* emerged as the *Marquise de Pompadour*.

Madame de Pompadour had as much wit as beauty. Love was not enough for her, if indeed love it was. Like *Cæsar*, she was ambitious. Once established, *Madame de Pompadour* set things in order. All *Louis'* mail was opened by her; all his ministers must approach her first; all decisions rested on her consent. She corresponded with foreign diplomats, the eminent men of the time, and the generals of the army. Intelligent, a connoisseur of art—she etched and engraved—she welcomed the gifted writers and artists, extending her patronage to a host of them. *Voltaire* was one of her favourites. With the money lavished on her by the king, she distributed a large portion to poor girls and old men and rehabilitated ruined villages, thus giving the people a slight morsel of what had been taken from them by the state.

Louis XV, who had an indiscriminate passion for both religion and women, grew cold, and *Madame de Pompadour* grew worried. She made

her decision to subjugate the mistress and remain the absolute ruler of France. Therefore, she encouraged Louis in his debaucheries, even providing his amours. Madame de Pompadour looked not only to her material salvation but to her spiritual salvation. To Benedict XIV she sent this letter, explaining what she had done for her redemption and hoping for the Pope's approval:

“ . . . the atrocious calumnies which are circulated
about me . . . ”

EARLY in the year 1752, determined by motives, which it would serve no useful purpose to enumerate, to henceforth retain for the King nothing but sentiments of gratitude and the purest affection, I informed his Majesty of my resolution, at the same time entreating him to order the doctors of the Sorbonne to meet in consultation, and to send word to his confessor to confer with others, to the end that some means might be devised whereby, such being his wish, I might be allowed to remain near his person, without running the risk of being suspected of a sin of which I was no longer guilty.

The King, knowing my character, felt that there was no hope of my repenting of my resolution and complied with my wishes. He made the doctors meet in consultation, and wrote to Father Pérusseau, who demanded of him a complete separation. The King replied that he would by no means consent to such a proposal; that it was not for his own sake that he wished an arrangement to be made which should leave the public no grounds for suspicion, but for my satisfaction alone; that I was necessary to his happiness, to the proper conduct of his affairs; that I was the only person who dared to tell him the truth, so useful to kings,

&c. The good Father, in the hope of shaking the King's determination, invariably gave the same reply. The doctors (of the Sorbonne) would have returned answers which would have made an arrangement possible, but the Jesuits refused their consent. I spoke at that time to several persons who were anxious for the welfare of the King and religion, and warned them that if Father Pérusseu refrained from putting a check upon the King by admitting him to the sacraments, he would abandon himself to a mode of life which would scandalise everyone. I failed in my endeavour to persuade them, and it was seen very shortly afterwards that I had not been mistaken.

Then, after long reflections on the calamities which had pursued me, even at the summit of my fortunes, the certainty that the good things of this world would not bring happiness, seeing that I had lacked none of them and yet had failed to attain it; my indifference to the diversions which had formerly afforded me most pleasure, all contributed to inspire me with the belief that there is no happiness save in God. I addressed myself to Father Sacy as to a man deeply impressed with that truth; I opened my whole soul to him; he privately put my sincerity to the proof from the month of September until the end of January, 1756. He then proposed that I should write a letter to my husband, of which I possess the draft that he himself wrote out. My husband refused to see me again. The Father made me apply for a post in the Queen's Household, for the sake of appearances; he made me remove the staircase which gave admission to my apartments, and the King no longer entered except through the ordinary antechamber; in short, he prescribed for me a rule of conduct, which I observed implicitly.

These changes made a great stir both at Court and in the town. The busybodies of every class took upon themselves to interfere. Father Sacy was attacked, and informed me that he should refuse me the sacraments so long as I remained at Court. I represented to him all the tests which he had imposed upon me, the different character which my relation with the King had assumed, according to his own admission. He concluded by informing me that people had mocked at the King's confessor when the Comte de

Toulouse was brought into the world, and he had no desire to find himself in a similar predicament. I had no answer to make to such a line of reasoning, and when, urged on by the desire of fulfilling my duties, I had exhausted every argument that I thought most likely to convince him that I was actuated by religious, and not by intriguing, motives, I saw him no more. The abominable 5th of January arrived, and was followed by the same intrigues as in the previous year. The King did everything in his power to convince Father Desmarets of the sincerity of his religion. The same motives were at work; the answer was the same; and the King, who ardently desired to fulfil his Christian duties, was deprived of them, and fell back, after a brief interval, into the same errors, from which he might have been rescued had they acted in good faith.

In spite of the extreme patience which I had shown for eighteen months under Father Sacy, my heart was, nevertheless, torn by my condition; and I took counsel with an honest man in whom I had confidence. He was touched, and cast about him for some means of putting an end to my unhappiness. An abbé, one of his friends, as learned as he was intelligent, explained my position to a man, like himself fully competent to give an opinion upon it. Both decided that my conduct did not permit the penance which they would have compelled me to undergo. In consequence, my confessor, after a fresh period of probation, put an end to the injustice by permitting me to approach the sacraments; and, though I feel in secret some pain that it is necessary to be on my guard lest my confessor should give heed to the atrocious calumnies which are circulated about me, it is a great consolation for my soul.

WHETHER or not the Pope condoned her actions, Madame de Pompadour went on being Louis' guiding genius. Her genius boded ill for France. Through her, France signed the Treaty of Versailles, an alliance between Russia, Austria, and France. France, or Madame de Pompadour, refused to renew the neutrality agreement with Prussia:

Frederick the Great had written some scandalous verses on her. This Alliance des trois cotillons—the petticoats belonging to Elizabeth of Russia, Maria Theresa, and Madame de Pompadour—was a direct cause of the disastrous Seven Years' War.

Despite disaster, Madame de Pompadour clung tenaciously to her position. She remembered the difficulties she had in getting absolution from the Jesuits. When they were attacked by the Encyclopedists and the ministers of state, she joined in, and the order was dissolved in France. The affairs of state, plus her constant round of social activities, were beginning to tell on her. While she lay dying, only forty-two years old, of overwork, another mistress whose follies would be even greater stepped into her place—Madame du Barry.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU AND MADAME D'ÉPINAY
LAY DOWN THEIR RULES OF FRIENDSHIP

[AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS]

SENTIMENTAL and bearish, Jean Jacques Rousseau, the enemy of Aristocracy and monarchy, nevertheless found them useful: he rarely lacked a patron. As a corollary, he rarely kept one. If the savage state were indeed the best, as Rousseau blithely maintained by the simple expediency of shutting both eyes, and the good in man were corrupted by society, he is proof of his own argument. But genius is forgivable, especially at a safe distance in time, and Rousseau was a genius. As Jean d'Alembert, the Encyclopedist and his erstwhile friend, remarked: "Jean Jacques is a madman who is very clever, and who is only clever when he is in a fever; it is best therefore neither to cure nor insult him." He was clever enough to write a few operas, to lay a solid basis for the French Revolution through his *Émile* and *Le Contrat social*, and to influence the style of Goethe, Chateaubriand, and, indeed, all romantic novelists.

Madame d'Épinay was clever, too, in her fashionable way: "She was amiable, had wit and talent," said Rousseau. But, in a society Rousseau characterised as having "a high sense of propriety and no morals," it was her double misfortune to have a philandering, vapid husband and a dull lover. When Madame d'Épinay's lover introduced Rousseau to her, he was also ushering himself out. For it was Rousseau who brought Baron Frédéric Melchior Grimm and her together, a union that lasted until her death. Rousseau's friendship with her was not so long-lived.

In 1756, tired of Paris and hesitating whether to return to Geneva, Rousseau received an offer from Madame d'Épinay to stay at a cottage, *The Hermitage*, on her husband's estate at Montmorency. This invitation he accepted, after some misgivings, and in April moved with his mistress,

Thérèse le Vasseur, and her mother into The Hermitage. Solitude is what he wanted, and solitude is what he did not get. Madame d'Épinay had a great yearning to be a salonnière—a difficult rôle to play in the country. So she bombarded Rousseau with notes and requests to visit her and even sent him one of her petticoats to be made into something to keep him warm.

Denis Diderot, whose penchant for meddling equalled that of his enemy, Madame d'Épinay, tried to get Rousseau to return to Paris. He went as far as to tell him that it was cruel and inhuman to make old Madame le Vasseur stay in the woods in winter. Rousseau answered Diderot in no uncertain terms and, as always, did not keep the quarrel to himself. Madame d'Épinay attempted to reconcile the two, saying that perhaps next he would complain of her. Whereupon Rousseau dispatched this letter to her :

“ . . . I am more sensitive than other men.”

[1756]

WHAT has given you the idea that I shall be complaining of you next? If I had anything to complain of, it would be that you humour me too much, and treat me too kindly. What I more often require is to be pitched into. I quite like a scolding when I deserve it. I think I am the sort of person to regard it sometimes as a kind of friendly cajolery. But one can have a row with a friend, without treating him with contempt: one can tell him straight out that he's a fool, but not that he's a rascal. You will never tell me that you consider that it's a great kindness on your part to think well of me at all. You will never hint to me that a close inspection into my character would involve considerable lessening of esteem. You will never say to me—"And surely, a deal more could be said on the subject?" That would not merely be insulting to me but insulting to yourself, for it does not behove decent bodies to

have friends of whom they have a low opinion. But if I had happened to misunderstand anything you had said on this subject, you would certainly have hastened to explain to me what you had meant and would not have persisted in harshly and coldly reiterating the same remarks, so that they conveyed exactly the same unfortunate impression as before. Surely, Madame, you don't call this—mere form—exterior?

Since we are on this topic, I should like to tell you what I demand of friendship and what I, on my side, am willing to give. Don't be afraid to find fault with my rule for friendship, but don't expect me to be easily turned from it, for it is the result of my temperament which I cannot alter.

Firstly, I want my friends to be my friends and not my masters: to advise me but not try to rule me: to have every claim upon my heart but none upon my liberty. I consider it extraordinary—the way people interfere, in friendship's name, in my affairs, without telling me of theirs.

I wish them to speak out frankly and freely to me—to say anything they like to me: contempt excepted, I permit all. To the scorn of one indifferent to me I am indifferent, but if I stood it from a friend I should deserve it. If he is so unfortunate as to scorn me let him not tell me so, but let him drop me—'tis his duty toward himself. With this one exception—he has a right to expostulate with me, no matter what tone he takes, and I, having listened to what he has to say, have a right to take it or leave it: and I don't care to be nagged continually about a thing that's past and done with.

Their great eagerness to do me a thousand services wearies me: there is a touch of patronage about it that annoys me: besides, anyone else could do as much. I would rather that they should just love me and let me love them: that's the one thing a friend is for. Especially does it make me indignant when any newcomer can take my place with them, whilst, in all the world, they are the only ones whose society I can stand. It is only their affection that makes me endure their kindnesses: but when I do bring myself to accept their kindness I do wish that they would consult

my tastes and not their own, for we think so differently on so many points that often what they consider good I consider bad.

If there should happen to be a falling out, I say distinctly that it is for him who is in fault to offer the olive branch first, but that means nothing, for we all think we are in the right: right or wrong, he who began the quarrel should end it. If I take his censure ill, if I get vexed unreasonably, if I get angry without good cause, it is not for him to follow my example: he does not love me, if he does. On the contrary, I would have him be very loving with me and embrace me tenderly, do you see, Madame? In a word, let him commence by appeasing me, and that assuredly will not take long, for never was there a conflagration in my heart that a tear could not quench. Then, when I am melted, calmed, ashamed, covered with confusion, let him rate me well, and tell me straight where I'm wrong, and assuredly he will be satisfied with me. If it is simply a matter of some trifle not worth going into, then let the matter drop, and let the aggressor be the first to hold his peace, and not make it a stupid point of honour always to have the last word. That's how I would have my friend act toward me, and how I am always prepared to act toward him in like case.

In this connection I would cite a little instance, of which you have no suspicion, although it has to do with you. It is with regard to a note that I received from you some time back, in answer to one of mine, which I saw you had not quite liked, and of which you had not, I thought, quite understood the meaning. I wrote a fairly good reply, or at least I thought so, its tone was certainly quite friendly, but at the same time there was, undeniably, a dash of quick temper about it, and on re-reading it, I feared that you would be no better pleased with it than with the former. Promptly I threw it on the fire, and I cannot tell you how relieved I was to see my eloquence consumed in the flames. I never told you, and I believe I had the honour of giving way. Sometimes, even such a tiny spark will set a big blaze alight. My dear kind friend, it was Pythagoras who said that one should never poke the fire with a sword: a saying

which seems to me to embody a most important and sacred law of friendship.

I demand of a friend more even than all I have so far stated, more even than he must demand of me and than I should demand of him were he in my place and I in his. As a recluse, I am more sensitive than other men. Suppose I fall out with one who lives amid the throng—he thinks of the matter for a moment, then a hundred and one distractions will make him forget it for the rest of the day. But nothing takes my thoughts off it. Sleepless, I think of it all night long, walking by myself, I think of it from sunrise to sunset: my heart has not an instant's respite and a friend's unkindness will cause me to suffer, in a single day, years of grief. As an invalid, I have a right to the indulgence due from his fellow men to the little weaknesses and temper of a sick man. What friend, what decent body, would not shrink from wounding an unhappy creature afflicted with an incurable and painful malady? I am poor and my poverty (or so it seems to me) entitles me to some consideration. All the little indulgences that I demand, you have shown me without my ever having mentioned them, and surely a true friend would never need to be asked, but, my dear friend—to put it frankly—do you know any who are friends of mine? My word! lucky for me that I've learnt to do without them. I know many a one who would not be sorry were I under an obligation to him, and there's many a one to whom I am under obligation—but of hearts fit to respond to mine!— Ah, 'tis enough to have known one.

So do not be surprised if I hate Paris yet more and more. Nothing for me but vexation, out of Paris, except your letters. Never shall I be seen there again. If you care to state your views on this subject, and just as vigorously as you like, well, you have the right to do so. They will be taken in good part and will be—useless. After that—you won't try again. . . .

LOUISE FLORENCE PÉTRONILLE TARDIEU D'ESCLAVELLES, MARQUISE D'ÉPINAY, *and Rousseau were never lovers, at least not in the exact sense of the word. In his Confessions, Rousseau gave one of the reasons why: "She was very thin, very pale, and had a bosom which resembled the back of her hand." Theirs was a friendship, and in reply to his letter, she wrote what it meant to her:*

"Oh, leave these petty complaints to the empty-hearted and empty-headed!"

[1756]

I THINK, my friend, that it is very difficult to lay down hard-and-fast rules for friendship, for we all of us, very naturally, make rules according to our own way of thinking. You tell me what you expect of your friends: presently a friend of mine comes along who wants something totally different: and the result is that I, who have quite a different temperament, will be contriving some ten times a day to make my friends curse me, while I, on my side, of course, will wish them to the devil. There are two general rules—essential and indispensable in friendship, to which everyone must subscribe—tolerance and liberty. There's no tie that will not snap without these two things, and that—or practically that—is my code, in a nutshell. I should not demand from a friend a love that is hot, tender, well-pondered, or effusive, but I simply ask him to love me as best he can, according to his temperament, for all my wishing will not alter him, be he reserved, fickle, grave or gay, and to be forever dwelling on some quality that he lacks, and which I am set on his possessing, would result in my not being able to stand him. See—we should love our friends as true lovers of art love pictures: they keep their eyes fixed on the good points and do not notice the others.

If a quarrel should arise, you say, if my friend treats me badly, etc., etc. Oh! I don't understand this talk of "my friend has treated me badly". In friendship I know but one bad treatment—mistrust. But when you say—one day he keeps things from me—another day he prefers this or that to the pleasure of my society or to paying me proper attention—or he should have given up that for me. And then there are black looks! Oh, leave these petty complaints to the empty-hearted and empty-headed! They're only for silly little, vulgar lovers, who go in for petty, low, mean quarrels which make them narrow-minded and sour-tempered, and paltry if not vicious, instead of being trustful and confident, and bubbling over with affection and so, like upright and high-hearted persons, grow more loving through being philosophic and virtuous. Does it become a philosopher, a friend of wisdom, to do as faint-hearted, narrow-minded devotees do, who substitute their miserable little superstitions for the true love of God? Believe me, he who really understands human nature will not find it hard to pardon his fellow creatures' weaknesses, and will love them for their good deeds, knowing how hard it is to be good.

Your rules for friendship, coming just after your quarrel with Diderot, remind me somewhat of the regulations which the English nation invariably adopt, when some crisis reveals a defect in their laws which is at the root of the trouble, and which, not having been foreseen, cannot be remedied immediately.

As for me, my friend, when, at the beginning of my letter, I laid down liberty and tolerance as fundamental principles, I did not anticipate permitting myself so much of the one, and requiring so much of the other. Forgive me my impertinence, for the sake of my sincerity. My God! what a host of excellent things I have still left unsaid, but I get interrupted every two minutes. I have only time to whisper to you that I defy you, in spite of my naughty teasings, to be cross with me: for with all my faults, I love you with all my heart!

STILL, it was not long before Rousseau was writing to Madame d'Épinay: "Friendship is dead between us." What caused this is a skein of intrigue so tangled that no one has ever properly straightened it out. According to one version, Madame d'Épinay became ill (she had a cancer), decided to go to Geneva to consult the famous Dr. Tronchin, and asked Rousseau to accompany her. Rousseau, for reasons of health, so he said, reneged. As usual, Diderot interfered, writing Rousseau that he was duty-bound to accompany his benefactress, even if he had to walk through mud. Baron Grimm also had his say, with the result that Rousseau sent him a long letter telling him why he could not go. "As for kindnesses," he said, "I don't like them, I don't want them, and I don't feel grateful to those who force them upon me." And in December, 1757, he left *The Hermitage*.

In his *Confessions*, which he read to his friends in 1770, Rousseau told a different story. Madame d'Épinay was pregnant, Grimm being the father-to-be, and went to Geneva for the birth. When Madame d'Épinay heard this version, she set about at once to stop the readings. As in a great part of the *Confessions*, Rousseau is not reliable. It seems unlikely that Madame d'Épinay would have gone to Geneva with her son, his tutor, and her husband, to give birth to another man's child. At Geneva she would certainly meet friends, among them Voltaire, who could never have been induced to keep silent about a delicious bit of scandal.

Madame d'Épinay's *Mémoires*, published in 1818, revived the old arguments. Admirers of Rousseau—and they numbered Lord Byron and Benjamin Constant, Madame de Staël's lover—raised a furious protest and accused Diderot and Grimm of doctoring the *Mémoires*.

CATHERINE THE GREAT DETAILS THE PLOT THAT MADE HER EMPRESS OF RUSSIA

[A LETTER TO COUNT STANISLAUS PONIATOWSKI]

CATHERINE II's claim to the epithet "the Great" subsists mostly on numerical superiority—the number of her lovers. As time passes and romantic notions give way—by no means the usual procedure—Catherine remains the "benevolent" despot, as always, but the accent is now on the despot. That she was talented, there is no doubt; that she benefited Russia, there is a great deal of doubt. What she did was to save the Russian people from an even worse fate: Peter III.

How a German princess came to rule "all the Russias" and become a female Peter the Great is all to Catherine's credit. When, at the age of fifteen, she was affianced to the Grand Duke Peter, Elizabeth's heir to the throne, the then Sophie Augusta Frederica, Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, gave up her Protestant faith for the Greek Orthodox and emerged as Catherine Alexeievna. Besides the Russian religion, in which she had no real belief, she adopted the Russian language. These were the less onerous obligations on the path to the throne; the chief one she married in 1745.

Peter III was the nearest thing to an imbecile that ever ruled a country; fortunately, he ruled it for only six months. Mean, ugly—most of his contemporaries likened him to a monkey—debauched, he had a passion only for his pleasures and for spectacular uniforms. He worshipped Frederick the Great, mostly because he fancied a resemblance between Frederick and himself and because the Prussian knew good uniforms, ornamenting them with all the braid, medals, and elaborate buttons so dear to Peter's heart. Peter hated only two things: Catherine and the Russian people.

Ten years after their marriage, Catherine gave birth to an heir—just

whose heir has never been certain. Peter had the unique reputation of being both impotent and a notorious profligate. Catherine had a reputation for being only a profligate.

When Peter succeeded the Empress Elizabeth, he embarked on a series of follies that roused the ire of the nobles and the army. Catherine, by her known respect for the Russians and through her connections in the Guard—two of the Orlov brothers were her lovers, Gregory holding first place—became the pivot of a plot to dethrone Peter. Over two rightful heirs—Ivan VI, imprisoned in the fortress of Schlüsselburg, and her son Paul—Catherine gained the empire by a bloodless revolution. To Count Stanislaus Poniatowski, who had been her chief lover during his residence at her court, she sent her story of the coup, promising him his award:

“The soldiers . . . called me their saviour.”

August 2 [Old Style], 1762

I AM sending Count Keyserling at once to Poland to make you King after the death of the present King. In case he should have no success for you I desire that Prince Adam shall be King.

The minds of all are still excited. I beg you not to come here and add still more to this excitement.

My accession to the throne had been under preparation for six months. Peter III had lost still more of the little understanding that he once possessed. He tried to thrust his head through the wall. He wished to cashier the Guard and for this reason he sent them into the field; he had replaced them by his Holstein troops, who were to remain in the city. He wished to change the faith, marry L. V. [Elisabeth Vorontsova] and lock me up in prison. On the day of the peace celebration he insulted me in public at dinner and in the evening he gave an order to arrest

me. My uncle, Prince George, induced him to withdraw this order.

After this day, I lent my ear to the proposals which had been made to me since the death of the Empress. The plan was to arrest him in his room and lock him up, like Princess Anna and her children. He went to Oranienbaum. We were sure of a large number of the principal people in the regiments of the Guards. The threads of the plot lay in the hands of the brothers Orlov. Osten remembered how he had seen the eldest always running after me and committing a thousand follies. His passion for me was generally known, and he has done everything from this standpoint. They are people of the utmost resolution and much beloved by most of the soldiers, for they have served in the Guards. I am under the greatest obligation toward them; all Petersburg is a witness to it.

The minds of the Guard had been prepared and at last there were thirty to forty officers in the secret and about 10,000 soldiers. For three weeks there was no betrayer because there were four separate groups, whose leaders were united for the execution of the plan. The real secret was in the hands of the three brothers. Panin wished that the enterprise should be in favour of my son; but they would never agree to that.

I was in Peterhof. Peter III lived and got drunk at Oranienbaum. We had agreed in case of a betrayal not to await his return, but to assemble the Guard and proclaim myself as ruler. Zealousness on my behalf accomplished for me what a betrayal would have done.

On the 27th a rumour that I had been arrested spread among the troops. The soldiers became excited; one of our officers quieted them. Then a soldier came to a captain by the name of Passek, the leader of the groups, and told him that I was certainly lost. He assured him that he had news of me. The soldier, still disturbed on my account, went to another officer and told him the same. The latter had not been initiated in the secret and was startled when he heard that an officer had let this soldier go and had not arrested him. He went to the Major and the latter then ordered the arrest of Passek. The whole regiment was now in

action. During the night the report was sent to Oranienbaum. There was great distress among my confederates. They decided before all else to send the second of the Orlov brothers to fetch me to the city; the other two went everywhere spreading the news that I would soon arrive. . . .

At six o'clock on the morning of the 28th, I lay quietly sleeping. It had been a very restless day for me because I knew what was under way. Then Alexei Orlov entered my room and said with great calmness: "It is time for you to arise; everything is ready to proclaim you." I asked him for particulars and he said, "Passek is arrested." I no longer hesitated; dressing myself as quickly as possible without making a toilette, I entered the carriage that he had brought. Another officer, disguised as a lackey, stood at the door of the coach; another came to meet me a few versts from Peterhof. Five versts distant from the city I met the elder Orlov with the younger Prince Bariatinsky. The latter gave me his place in the carriage, for my horses were exhausted. We drove to the Izmailovsky Regiment and there alighted. There were only twelve men there and a drummer who at once beat the alarm. The soldiers came, embraced me, kissed my feet, my hands, my dress, and called me their saviour. Two of them led forward by the arms a priest with a cross and they began to take the oath of allegiance to me. When that was done I was bidden to step into a coach. The priest with the cross walked ahead. We marched to the Semionovsky Regiment which came to meet us with loud *vivas*. Then we went on to the Kazan Cathedral where I alighted.

The Preobrashensky Regiment arrived with cries of *viva*, and the people said: "We beg your pardon for being the last to arrive. Our officers held us back, but we have brought four of them with us under arrest as a testimonial of our zeal. We wished the same as our brothers." Next came the Horse Guard. The people were mad with joy; I have never seen anything like it. They wept and invoked the freedom of the Fatherland. . . . Because I knew that my uncle, to whom Peter III had given this regiment, was terribly hated by them, I sent foot guards to him to request him to remain in his house so that no harm might befall his person. But it turned

out otherwise; his regiment had sent a division to arrest him; they plundered his house and maltreated him.

I betook myself to the new Winter Palace, where the Senate and the Synod were assembled. The manifesto and the oath were hastily drawn up. Then I went down and made the round of the troops on foot. There were more than 14,000 men from the Guard and the foot regiments. As soon as they caught sight of me, they raised a great cry of joy in which a vast crowd of people joined. Then I went to the old Winter Palace to adopt the necessary measures and bring the matter to an end. There we held a council and it was decided to march with me at the head to Peterhof where Peter III was to dine. Posts were stationed along all the country roads and from time to time they brought spies in to us.

I sent Admiral Talyzin to Kronstadt. Then came Chancellor Vorontsov, who had been sent to reproach me for my flight. He was led into the church to take the oath. Then came Prince Troubetsky and Count Shuvalov from Peterhof to make sure of the regiments and kill me. They were led away without resistance to take the oath.

After we had sent out all our couriers and had taken every precautionary measure, I put on at ten o'clock in the evening the uniform of the Guard, after I had had myself named Colonel amid indescribable jubilation. I mounted my horse and we left behind us a few men from each regiment for the protection of my son who remained in the city. So I rode out at the head of the troops and we marched all night to Peterhof.

When we arrived at a little cloister on the way, Vice-Chancellor Golitsin came with a very obsequious letter from Peter III. . . . After the first letter came a second, which General Izmailov brought. He threw himself at my feet and said: "Do you regard me as an honourable man?" I answered yes. "Very well," said he; "it gives me pleasure to be with people of spirit. The Emperor offers to abdicate the throne. After his wholly voluntary abdication I will bring him here. Thus without difficulty I will save my Fatherland from civil war." So I gave him this commission and he went to carry it out. Peter III abdicated in Oranienbaum in

complete freedom, surrounded by 1590 Holsteiners, and came with Elisabeth Vorontsova, Gudovich, and Izmailov to Peterhof, where I gave him six officers and several soldiers as a guard.

Since it was already about midday of the 29th, St. Peter's Day, it was time to eat. While food was being prepared for the many people, the soldiers imagined that Peter III had been brought by Field-Marshal Prince Troubetsky and that he was striving to make peace between us. They said to all who came to them . . . they had not seen me for three hours and they were perishing of fear that the old rascal Troubetsky might betray me, "in that he might make a false peace between you and your husband and hurl us all to destruction; but we will tear him to pieces." These were their expressions. I went to Troubetsky and said to him: "I beg you to get into your carriage while I make the round of the troops on foot." I told him what was happening. Quite terrified, he drove to the city and I was received with unheard-of jubilation.

Then I sent the deposed Emperor, under the command of Alexei Orlov with four officers and a division of peaceful chosen people, to a remote and very pleasant place called Ropsha, 25 versts from Petersburg, while decent and suitable quarters were fitted up in Schlüsselburg, and so had time to provide relays of horses for him.

But the good God arranged it otherwise! The anxiety had caused him to have a diarrhoea, which lasted for three days and still continued on the fourth. On this day he drank immoderately, for he had everything he wanted except his freedom. (He had incidentally asked for his mistress, his dog, his Negro, and his violin; but in order to avoid a scandal and prevent increasing the excitement of his guards I had only sent him the last three.) He was attacked by a hæmorrhoidal colic and fever fantasies. For two days he was in this condition; this was followed by great weakness and in spite of all that medical aid could do he breathed his last, after he had asked for a Lutheran pastor. I feared the officers might have poisoned him. Therefore I had the body dissected; but it was completely proved that not the least trace of poison existed. His stomach was quite healthy, but an inflammation of the intestines and a fit of apoplexy had carried

him off. His heart was unusually small and quite shrunken.

After his departure from Peterhof, I was advised to go straight-way to the city. I foresaw that the troops would be disturbed at this. I sent forth a rumour to this effect under the pretext of wishing to know at what hour they would be ready to start after these three fatiguing days. They said: "Towards ten o'clock in the evening; but you must come with us." So I started with them, and half-way there I withdrew into the country house of Kurakin, where wholly dressed I threw myself upon a bed. An officer took off my boots. I slept two hours and a half and then we resumed our march. From Catherinenhof onward I rode again at the head of the Preobrashensky Regiment. A regiment of hussars went ahead; then came my escort from the Horse Guard; then immediately in front of me my court. Following were the regiments of the Guard according to their rank and three field regiments.

Amid a never-ending jubilation I entered the city and went to the Summer Palace where the court, the Synod, my son, and all those who were entitled to appear at court were awaiting me. I went to Mass; then the *Te Deum* was sung. Afterwards I received congratulations. Then, having scarcely eaten or drunk or slept from Friday morning at six o'clock until Sunday evening, I went to bed and fell asleep.

At midnight, when I had scarcely fallen asleep, Captain Passek entered my room and waked me with the words: "Our people are terribly drunk; a hussar in that condition has just been running about and crying out: 'To arms! 30,000 Prussians are coming and wish to take our Mother.' Thereupon they seized their weapons and are now coming here to inquire about your welfare. They say they have not seen you for the last three hours and they will go home peacefully if they see that you are well. They will not listen to their leaders or to the Orlovs." So I was again on foot, and in order not to alarm needlessly my watch guard, which consisted of one battalion, I went to them and told them why I was going out at this hour. Accompanied by two officers, I entered my carriage and went to them. I told them that I was well and that they should go to sleep and also allow me to rest. I had only just lain down

after not having slept for three nights and I wished that in the future they would hearken to their officers. They replied that the alarm had gone out among them on account of these accursed Prussians and they were all ready to die for me. I said: "Fine. I thank you; but now go to sleep." Thereupon they wished me good night and good health and went away like lambs, frequently turning back as they went to look after my carriage.

The next day they asked to be excused and regretted that they had awakened me. They said: "If all of us should see you all the time, we should injure your health and disturb you in the business of the state."

I should have to write a whole book to describe the attitude of each of the leaders. . . .

Princess Dashkova, the younger sister of Elisabeth Vorontsova, wishes indeed to take all the honours because she was acquainted with a few of the leaders. But on account of her family connections and her age, which was only nineteen, she did not stand in good repute; she inspired confidence in no one. To be sure she always insisted that everything had come to me through her. But all of the conspirators had been in touch with me for six months before she even knew their names. It is true that she is very clever, but besides her great vanity she has a muddle-headed character and our leaders did not like her. Only thoughtless people put her in possession of what they knew and this consisted only of small details. I. I. Shuvalov, the basest and most infamous human being that could be imagined, has nevertheless, it seems, written to Voltaire that a nineteen-year-old woman has changed the government of this country. Please teach this great author better! We had to conceal from the Princess the ways by which the others communicated with me, five months before she knew the least thing, and during the last four weeks she was told as little as possible. . . .

There you have approximately our story. The whole thing, I confess to you, happened under my own direction, and at the close I even poured water on the fire because the departure for the country prevented the execution of the plan and all had been

ready for the past two weeks. When the former Emperor heard of the uprising in the city, the young women who formed his retinue prevented him from following the advice of the old Field-Marshal Münnich, who recommended that he throw himself at Kronstadt or go to the army with a small escort. When he betook himself to Kronstadt in a small galley, the city was, owing to the swift action of Admiral Talyzin, already in our hands. On his arrival, he had disarmed General Devier who was already there in the name of the Emperor. A harbour officer, of his own impulse, stopped the unfortunate Emperor with the threat that he would fire upon his galley. The good God finally brought everything to its appointed end, and all this is a miracle rather than a foreseen and prearranged affair, for the coincidence of so many fortunate circumstances cannot occur without the will of God.

I have received your letter. A regular correspondence would be exposed to a thousand disadvantages, and I have to take twenty thousand precautions and have no time to read dangerous love letters.

I am under a great compulsion. . . . I cannot tell it all to you, but it is true.

I will do everything for you and your family, be assured of that!

I must observe a thousand proprieties and take a thousand things into consideration; and withal I feel the whole burden of the business of government. Consider well that everything had its origin in hatred of the foreigners; Peter III himself is regarded as such.

Adieu! There are some very strange lots in the world.

CATHERINE made good her promise to Count Poniatowski two years later. When the reigning king of Poland died, an election was held to choose his successor. With Russian troops on Polish soil, with the state held in by Russia on one side and, on the other, by her ally, Prussia, at Catherine's express wish Poniatowski became Stanislaus II, the last King of Poland.

Less than ten years later, Catherine marched her troops into Poland and annexed a huge part. Before she was through, Poland was partitioned, territory going to Russia, Prussia, and Austria, and Poniatowski was completely humiliated by his former mistress. In 1795, a year before her death, she suggested that Poniatowski abdicate. He wisely took her counsel.

The Catherine who had corresponded with Voltaire and Grimm, the Catherine who had subscribed to Diderot's Encyclopédie, changed her sentiments or, rather, dropped her surface interest in the advancement of learning when Louis XVI lost his head in the French Revolution. If their teachings had caused that in France, she would see to it that Russia was purified of any such influence. Her "benevolence", propagated by the French writers in her pay, had given her enough favourable publicity in western Europe: now the price was too great. During her "enlightening" campaigns against Sweden, Turkey, and Poland, she managed to extirpate the cancerous growth of dangerous learning.

At the age of sixty-seven, living with her last lover and plotting a war against Persia, Catherine died, not unfittingly, of apoplexy. She had enlarged Russia; she had constricted her people.

LAURENCE STERNE BIDS DAVID GARRICK RETURN TO THE STAGE

DAMN him!" exclaimed the actress Kitty Clive of Garrick, "he could act a gridiron!" David Garrick, making his debut in London, as Richard III, took the town by storm. Though Gray and Walpole did not over-admire his acting, the rest of London was enthralled. James Quin, who became Garrick's friend, announced: "We are all wrong if this is right." For Garrick introduced a new style of acting—less ranting, fewer bold gestures, more facile facial expression, and, above all, simplicity. The great age of letter writing coincided with the great age of acting—Charles Macklin, Quin, Peg Woffington, Mrs. Cibber, and Kitty Clive were its exponents in the drama, and Garrick outdistanced them all. Decided Alexander Pope: "That young man never had his equal, and never will have a rival."

David Garrick met Laurence Sterne after the publication of *Tristram Shandy*. With his wife insane and his daughter in poor health, Sterne buried his cares in writing his masterpiece. When he had completed a large part of the book, a friend asked him to read parts of it aloud to a select company he had gathered. Sterne read, and the group, sated with a good dinner and remembering Sterne as the parson, promptly fell asleep. Sterne is said to have tossed the sheets into the fire. Fortunately, his friend rescued the burned manuscript from the flames. In a short time, Sterne was world-famous. A bet was even wagered that a letter addressed to "Tristram Shandy in Europe" would reach Sterne at his place in Sutton. It did.

Garrick was one of Tristram's earliest enthusiasts, and he and Sterne fast became friends. Of him, Sterne wrote: "O God! they have nothing here [Paris], which gives the nerves so smart a blow, as those characters in the hands of Garrick!" and, with Sir Joshua Reynolds' just-completed famous portrait of Garrick in mind: "'Tis the greatest problem in nature, in this meridian, that one and the same man should possess such tragic

and comic powers, and in such an equilibrio, as to divide the world for which of the two Nature intended him."

Less than a year after Sterne wrote those words, Garrick decided to leave the stage. He was a peaceful, though pampered, man. When a riot broke out during his presentation at the Drury Lane of Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and the theatre was almost set afire, not unusual occurrences in those days, he made his decision. Then, too, a change of air had been prescribed for his ailing wife. They left England in September, 1763, and toured Europe. Sterne took it upon himself to urge the return of his old friend. A new public favourite, William Powell, once ridiculously rumoured to be Garrick's son, had usurped Garrick's place at the Drury Lane, and Sterne wanted to see Garrick vanquish him. Garrick, however, remained unmoved by his friend's pleas, whereupon Sterne dispatched another letter:

"... teach us another lesson."

Bath, April 6, 1765

I SCALP you!—my dear Garrick! my dear friend! foul befall the man who hurts a hair of your head!—and so full was I of that very sentiment, that my letter had not been put into the post-office ten minutes, before my heart smote me; and I sent to recal it—but failed—You are sadly to blame, Shandy! for this, quoth I, leaning with my head on my hand, as I recriminated upon my false delicacy in the affair—Garrick's nerves (if he has any left) are as fine and delicately spun as thy own—his sentiments as honest and friendly—thou knowest, Shandy, that he loves thee—why wilt thou hazard him a moment's pain? Puppy! fool, coxcomb, jack-ass, &c. &c.—and so I balanced the account to your favour, before I received it drawn up in *your way*—I say *your way*—for it is not stated so much to your honour and credit; as I had passed the

account before—for it was a most lamented truth, that I never received one of the letters your friendship meant me, except whilst in Paris—Oh! how I congratulate you for the anxiety the world has, and continues to be under, for your return.—Return, return to the few who love you, and the thousands who admire you.—The moment you set your foot upon your stage—mark! I tell it you—by some magic irresistible power, every fibre about your heart will vibrate afresh, and as strong and feelingly as ever—Nature, with glory at her back, will light up the torch within you—and there is enough of it left, to heat and enlighten the world these many, many, many years.

Heaven be praised! (I utter it from my soul) that your lady, and my Minerva, is in a condition to walk to Windsor—full rapturously will I lead the graceful pilgrim to the temple, where I will sacrifice with the purest incense to her—but you may worship with me, or not—'twill make no difference either in the truth or warmth of my devotion—still (after all I have seen) I still maintain her peerless.

Powel! good Heaven!—give me some one with less smoke and more fire— There are who, like the Pharisees, still think they shall be heard for *much* speaking—Come—come away, my dear Garrick, and teach us another lesson.

Adieu!—I love you dearly—and your lady better—not hobbishorsically—but most sentimentally and affectionately—for I am yours (that is, if you never say another word about ——) with all the sentiments of love and friendship you deserve from me,

L. Sterne

TWO weeks after Garrick received Sterne's letter he was back in England. Finally, in November of the same year, he reappeared on the stage of the Drury Lane as Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*. True to Sterne's prediction, Garrick received a wild and tumultuous ovation. His fame now stood at its peak.

When Laurence Sterne died in 1768, Garrick wrote an epitaph for his friend:

*Shall Pride a heap of sculptur'd marble raise,
Some worthless, unmourn'd, titled fool to praise,
And shall we not by one poor grave-stone learn
Where Genius, Wit, and Humour sleep with Sterne?*

Sterne did not sleep there long, for his body was secretly dug up and sold to a Cambridge professor of anatomy. At the dissecting table, one of his friends recognised Sterne's features. The skeleton was preserved at Cambridge for some length of time.

When David Garrick died, his friend Dr. Johnson uttered these words: "I am disappointed by that stroke of death which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." Unlike Sterne, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, at the foot of Shakespeare's statue.

SAMUEL JOHNSON STANDS HIS GROUND IN UNMASKING A HOAX

[A LETTER TO JAMES MACPHERSON]

DURING the early sixties of the eighteenth century there was gradually added to the literature of Great Britain a considerable collection of verse-prose that was known familiarly as the poems of *Ossian*, a semi-mythical Gaelic bard of the third century. The best people subscribed to the sumptuous editions in which these poems made their appearance, and one of the epics was printed at the expense of the Earl of Bute, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's son-in-law. James Macpherson, who claimed that he had collected the Ossianic lays during his travels through the Highlands, became one of the literary lions of the capital on the strength of his recovery of this early literature.

Samuel Johnson suspected the Ossianic poems. As early as 1763, Macpherson had been challenged to show the original manuscripts collected by him during his wanderings in the Highlands, but he brazened out the difficult situation by offering to print them if anyone came forward to underwrite the venture. No one did. In 1773 Johnson and Boswell went through some parts of Scotland that Macpherson had explored in his alleged search for the alleged Gaelic lays, and two years later Johnson brought out a racy and characteristic description of his adventures with Boswell under the title of *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*.

One result of Johnson's travels was to strengthen his disbelief in the authenticity—the hoar oldness, that is—of *Ossian*. Just previous to the publication, someone—probably William Strahan, Johnson's publisher—had shown Macpherson a copy of *A Journey to the Western Islands*. There the Scotsman was enraged to find, besides other annoying references to *Ossian*, these words: “I suppose my opinion of the poems of *Ossian* is

already discovered. I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen. The editor, or author, never could shew the original; nor can it be shewn by any other; to revenge reasonable incredulity, by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence, with which the world is not yet acquainted: and stubborn audacity is the last refuge of guilt."

Macpherson was furious. Writing to Strahan a letter designed for Johnson's eye, he suggested that "such expression ought not to be used by one gentleman to another" and warned that they could not "be passed over with impunity," ending with a demand that Johnson cancel the offending passage. This was not at all Johnson's style of behaviour: he stood his ground, nor would he allow Strahan to use the advertisement Macpherson had written out for insertion in the press. Had Macpherson known Johnson as well as posterity does, he would never have expected him to make public apology for sincerely held opinions.

In short, Johnson did not retreat an inch. Macpherson therefore wrote him an insolent and threatening letter. This document has not been traced, but there is evidence that in it he asserted that Johnson's "age and infirmities, alone, protected him from the treatment due to an infamous liar and traducer." Whatever its contents, they included menaces that induced the Doctor to equip himself with an oak staff of formidable proportions for his protection and to hurl the following letter of defiance at his adversary:

"Your rage I defy . . ."

January 20, 1775

MR. JAMES MACPHERSON:

I received your foolish and impudent note. Whatever insult is offered me I will do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself the law will do for me. I will not desist from detecting what I think a cheat from any fear of the menaces of a Ruffian.

You want me to retract. What shall I retract? I thought your book an imposture from the beginning. I think it upon yet surer reasons an imposture still. For this opinion I give the publick my reasons which I here dare you to refute.

But however I may despise you, I reverence truth and if you can prove the genuineness of the work I will confess it. Your rage I defy, your abilities since your Homer are not so formidable, and what I have heard of your morals disposes me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you can prove.

You may print this if you will.

Sam: Johnson

JOHNSON and Macpherson never came to blows—they were both large, hefty men, but an encounter between them might have gone badly for the sixty-five-year-old Doctor, who was the Scotsman's senior by more than a quarter of a century. They were both buried in Westminster Abbey, Johnson by acclaim of the nation, Macpherson at his own request (he died a member of Parliament).

The Ossianic controversy did not perish with its protagonists. It is

alive, though feebly, even today. But Ossian itself, or himself, is not read. Although effusive Hester Lynch, not yet married to Thrale the brewer, declared that it drove her "half frantic", and although she found herself in such goodly company as Goethe, Schiller, Gray, and numerous others, Ossian is, as living literature, rather less lively than the Book of the Dead. It is difficult to believe that it was the favourite reading of Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon I. As Saintsbury said of it: "The extraordinarily fashionable almost inevitably becomes the irreconcilably unfashionable."

HORACE WALPOLE ON POLITICS AND LITERATURE

[A SERIES OF LETTERS]

ON APRIL 2, 1926, Mr. Justice Holmes, who had just turned the mature age of eighty-five, wrote to his fellow legist Sir Frederick Pollock that he planned "to be as idle as I can. The only book I read, at odd moments, is Horace Walpole's *Correspondence*—just the thing for such moments. He once in a while is surprisingly ahead of his beef-eating contemporaries, and his style is so pleasant that one can read on indefinitely without fatigue. For all round, I think you might put him at the head of English letter writers. . . ."

Only at the head of English letter writers? The Earl of Birkenhead said that there is "no equivalent in any literature to Horace Walpole, save, perhaps, Madame de Sévigné," and Lytton Strachey put him second only to Voltaire. The best puff came from Saintsbury: "If the old game of selecting a thirdsman for 'The Bible and Shakespeare' in a library of three were resuscitated, Horace Walpole's Letters might be, by no mere joke, put forward as a candidate."

Walpole wrote for posterity. "His job in life," says W. S. Lewis, the latest and best of his various editors, "was to accumulate and arrange the chronicles of his own time and to present them in an entertaining way"—through the medium of four thousand letters, that is, far more considerable in bulk and quality than his more formal memoirs.

Walpole was fortunate in living to a great age, for, as Strachey has said, "What makes a correspondence fascinating is the cumulative effect

of slow, gradual, day-to-day development—the long, leisurely unfolding of a character and a life. The Walpole correspondence has this merit in a peculiar degree; its enormous progression carries the reader on and on through sixty years of living. . . . Though from the point of view of style, or personal charm, or originality of observation, other letter writers may deserve a place at least on an equality with that of Walpole, it is indisputable that the collected series of his letters forms by far the most important single correspondence in the language.”

HORACE WALPOLE SEES MORE THAN AMERICA LOST IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

[A LETTER TO SIR HORACE MANN]

WALPOLE carefully selected his correspondents in accordance with his four salient interests in life: politics, literature, antiquarianism, and gossip—and on each subject he wrote voluminously. As a son of Sir Robert Walpole, the great Whig leader, he inherited a love of politics that was fostered by twenty-five years in the House of Commons and an intimacy with most of the leading Whig and many of the leading Tory families. The multiplicity of his other interests, including the time involved in putting his best foot forward in his letters, restricted his political ambitions. He was, therefore, primarily an observer of political manoeuvres, not a participator.

In 1740, Walpole began a series of political letters, the recipient being his cousin, Henry Seymour Conway, a soldier-politician of not quite the first importance. This correspondence closed with Conway's death, fifty-five years later. A second series of political letters, addressed to Sir Horace Mann, also was ended by the recipient's death; it lasted forty-five years, Mann being British envoy at Florence the entire time. Both Walpole and Mann wrote their letters for future publication, and to that end they were inclined to play their chronicler's rôle somewhat too self-consciously. Mann's letters are often stiff and stuffy; Walpole's, with amazingly few exceptions, are usually written with ease and gusto.

As a political philosopher, Walpole was never very deep, but at least he was genuinely attached to the views he expressed. Until the excesses of the French Revolution he was a Whig of tolerably liberal cast, and if those excesses changed him into a shrill conservative, he cannot be said to have screeched more piercingly than that monument of solid worth and basic good will, Edmund Burke. In 1777, when the following letter

to Mann was penned, Walpole was violent in his opposition to the disastrous American policy of Lord North:

“ . . . preferred the empty name of sovereignty to
that of alliance . . . ”

Strawberry Hill, April 3, 1777

I HAVE nothing very new to tell you on public affairs, especially as I can know nothing more than you see in the papers. It is my opinion that the King's affairs are in a very bad position in America. I do not say that his armies may not gain advantages again; though I believe there has been as much design as cowardice in the behaviour of the provincials, who seem to have been apprised that protraction of the war would be more certainly advantageous to them than heroism. Washington, the dictator, has shown himself both a Fabius and a Camillus. His march through our lines is allowed to have been a prodigy of generalship. In one word, I look upon a great part of America as lost to this country! It is not less deplorable, that, between art and contention, such an inveteracy has been sown between the two countries as will probably outlast even the war! Supposing this unnatural enmity should not soon involve us in other wars, which would be extraordinary indeed, what a difference, in a future war with France and Spain, to have the Colonies in the opposite scale, instead of being in ours! What politicians are those who have preferred the empty name of *sovereignty* to that of *alliance*, and forced subsidies to the golden ocean of commerce!

Alas! the trade of America is not all we shall lose! The ocean of commerce wafted us wealth at the return of regular tides: but we had acquired an empire too, in whose plains the beggars we

sent out as labourers could reap sacks of gold in three or four harvests; and who with their sickles and reaping-hooks have robbed and cut the throats of those who sowed the grain. These rapacious foragers have fallen together by the ears; and our Indian affairs, I suppose, will soon be in as desperate a state as our American. Lord Pigot [Governor of Madras] has been treacherously and violently imprisoned, and the Company here has voted his restoration. I know nothing of the merits of the cause on either side: I dare to say both are very blameable. I look only to the consequences, which I do not doubt will precipitate the loss of our acquisitions there; the title to which I never admired, and the possession of which I always regarded as a transitory vision. If we could keep it, we should certainly plunder it, till the expense of maintaining would overbalance the returns; and, though it has rendered a little more than the holy city of Jerusalem, I look on such distant conquests as more destructive than beneficial; and, whether we are martyrs or banditti, whether we fight for the holy sepulchre or for lacks of rupees, I detest invasions of quiet kingdoms, both for their sakes and for our own; and it is happy for the former, that the latter are never permanently benefited.

Though I have been drawn away from your letter by the subject of it and by political reflections, I must not forget to thank you for your solicitude and advice about my health: but pray be assured that I am sufficiently attentive to it, and never stay long here in wet weather, which experience has told me is prejudicial. I am sorry for it, but I know London agrees with me better than the country. The latter suits my age and inclination; but my health is a more cogent reason, and governs me. I know my own constitution exactly, and have formed my way of life accordingly. No weather, nothing gives me cold; because, for these nine and thirty years, I have hardened myself so, by braving all weathers and taking no precautions against cold, that the extremest and most sudden changes do not affect me in that respect. Yet damp, without giving me cold, affects my nerves; and, the moment I feel it, I go to town. I am certainly better since my last fit of

gout than ever I was after one: in short, perfectly well; that is, well enough for my age.

In one word, I am very weak, but have no complaint; and as my constitution, frame, and health require no exercise, nothing but fatigue affects me: and therefore you, and all who are so good as to interest themselves about me and give advice, must excuse me if I take none. I am preached to about taking no care against catching cold, and am told I shall one day or other be caught—possibly: but I must die of something; and why should not what has done to sixty, be right? My regimen and practice have been formed on experience and success. Perhaps a practice that has suited the weakest of frames, would kill a Hercules. God forbid I should recommend it; for I never saw another human being that would not have died of my darings, especially in the gout. Yet I have always found benefit; because my nature is so feverish, that everything cold, inwardly or outwardly, suits me. Cold air and water are my specifics, and I shall die when I am not master enough of myself to employ them; or rather, as I said this winter, on comparing the iron texture of my inside with the debility of my outside, “I believe I shall have nothing but my inside left!” *Therefore*, my dear Sir, my regard for you will last as long as there is an atom of me remaining.

HORACE WALPOLE CASTS A VOTE AGAINST THE FAME OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

[A LETTER TO MISS BERRY]

FOR a man so frequently charged with waspishness and lack of feeling, Horace Walpole leaned heavily on his friendships. In fact, he seems to have had rather more friends than most people, and though he quarrelled with a number of them, the differences seem to have come rather from oversensitiveness on his part than from any cold-bloodedness. And spoiled aristocrat that he was, with a native, beautifully cultivated reluctance to unbend, he was sometimes pathetically eager to make things up. To Conway he was certainly devoted, and for Gray he felt, despite the famous quarrel, a real affection. Many of his correspondents he certainly esteemed, but it is difficult to believe that most of them found a way into his heart.

In 1788, eight years after the death of his "dear old blind woman", Madame du Deffand, Walpole made the acquaintance of two charming sisters, Mary and Agnes Berry. These ladies were "travelled, accomplished, extremely amiable, and a little French", and to them Walpole lost his ancient heart—he was more than seventy years old. The tender relationship that almost immediately sprang up between him and the sisters is possibly the most delightful incident in his life. One he addressed as "*Suavissima Maria*", the other as "*my sweet lamb*"; on one occasion he signed himself "*Horace Fondlewives*". They were, in short, his "twin wives", and Miss Mary, the elder, almost became his legal wife. As the Berrys were of restricted means, he gave them a house near Strawberry Hill, his fabulous Gothic villa near Twickenham, at very easy terms and willed it to them at his death.

The following letter, written to Mary Berry travelling in Italy, is one of Walpole's most brilliant cross-sections of the world of fashion, letters,

and miscellany, and includes at least one line that has achieved Bartlett's—or should have. In the society-almanac section, the reader will probably agree with the editors that footnoting such frippery and dazzle is an antiquarian's job; in the paragraphs about Johnson we pass into familiar territory, while the final matter gives us a glimpse of Walpole's own antiquarianism. Will every reader guess that Sir William Hamilton's "Nymph of the Attitudes" is the famous Emma—"the only cloud that obscured the bright fame of the immortal Nelson"?

“ . . . good-natured at bottom, he was very
ill-natured at top.”

Berkeley Square, May 26, 1791

I AM rich in letters from you: I received that by Lord Elgin's courier first, as you expected, and its elder the next day. You tell me mine entertain you; *tant mieux*. It is my wish, but my wonder; for I live so little in the world, that I do not know the present generation by sight: for, though I pass by them in the streets, the hats with valences, the folds above the chin of the ladies, and the dirty shirts and shaggy hair of the young men, who have levelled nobility almost as much as the nobility in France, have confounded all individuality. Besides, if I did go to public places and assemblies, which my going to roost earlier prevents, the bats and owls do not begin to fly abroad till far in the night, when they begin to see and be seen.

However, one of the empresses of fashion, the Duchess of Gordon, uses fifteen or sixteen hours of her four-and-twenty. I heard her journal of last Monday. She first went to Handel's music in the Abbey; she then clambered over the benches, and went to Hastings's trial in the Hall; after dinner, to the play;

then to Lady Lucan's assembly; after that to Ranelagh, and returned to Mrs. Hobart's faro-table; gave a ball herself in the evening of that morning, into which she must have got a good way; and set out for Scotland the next day. Hercules could not have achieved a quarter of her labours in the same space of time. What will the Great Duke think of our Amazons, if he has letters opened, as the Emperor was wont! One of our Camillas, but in a freer style, I hear, he saw (I fancy, just before your arrival); and he must have wondered at the familiarity of the Dame, and the nincompoophood of her Prince. Sir William Hamilton is arrived—his Nymph of the Attitudes was too prudish to visit the rambling peeress.

The rest of my letter must be literary; for we have no news. Boswell's book is gossiping; but, having numbers of proper names, would be more readable, at least by me, were it reduced from two volumes to one: but there are woful longueurs, both about his hero and himself, the *fidus Achates*; about whom one has not the smallest curiosity. But I wrong the original Achates: one is satisfied with his fidelity in keeping his master's secrets and weaknesses, which modern led-captains betray for their patron's glory and to hurt their own enemies; which Boswell has done shamefully, particularly against Mrs. Piozzi, and Mrs. Montagu, and Bishop Percy. Dr. Blagden says justly, that it is a new kind of libel, by which you may abuse anybody, by saying some dead person said so and so of somebody alive. Often, indeed, Johnson made the most brutal speeches to living persons; for though he was good-natured at bottom, he was very ill-natured at top. He loved to dispute to show his superiority. If his opponents were weak, he told them they were fools; if they vanquished him, he was scurrilous—to nobody more than to Boswell himself, who was contemptible for flattering him so grossly, and for enduring the coarse things he was continually vomiting on Boswell's own country, Scotland. I expected, amongst the excommunicated, to find myself, but am very gently treated. I never would be in the least acquainted with Johnson; or, as Boswell calls it, I had not a just value for him; which the biographer imputes to my

resentment for the Doctor's putting bad arguments (purposely, out of Jacobitism,) into the speeches which he wrote fifty years ago for my father, in the 'Gentleman's Magazine'; which I did not read then, or ever knew Johnson wrote till Johnson died, nor have looked at since. Johnson's blind Toryism and known brutality kept me aloof; nor did I ever exchange a syllable with him: nay, I do not think I ever was in a room with him six times in my days. Boswell came to me, said Dr. Johnson was writing the 'Lives of the Poets', and wished I would give him anecdotes of Mr. Gray. I said, very coldly, I had given what I knew to Mr. Mason. Boswell hummed and hawed, and then dropped, "I suppose you know Dr. Johnson does not admire Mr. Gray." Putting as much contempt as I could into my look and tone, I said, "Dr. Johnson don't!—humph!"—and with that monosyllable ended our interview. After the Doctor's death, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Boswell sent an ambling circular-letter to me, begging subscriptions for a Monument for him—the two last, I think, impertinently; as they could not but know my opinion, and could not suppose I would contribute to a Monument for one who had endeavoured, poor soul! to degrade my friend's superlative poetry. I would not deign to write an answer; but sent down word by my footman, as I would have done to parish officers with a brief, that I would not subscribe. In the two new volumes Johnson says, and very probably did, or is made to say, that Gray's poetry is *dull*, and that he was a *dull* man! The same oracle dislikes Prior, Swift, and Fielding. If an elephant could write a book, perhaps one that had read a great deal would say, that an Arabian horse is a very clumsy ungraceful animal. Pass to a better chapter!

Burke has published another pamphlet against the French Revolution, in which he attacks it still more grievously. The beginning is very good; but it is not equal, nor quite so injudicious as parts of its predecessor; is far less brilliant, as well as much shorter: but, were it ever so long, his mind overflows with such a torrent of images, that he cannot be tedious. His invective against Rousseau is admirable, just, and new. Voltaire

he passes almost contemptuously. I wish he had dissected Mirabeau too; and I grieve that he has omitted the violation of the consciences of the clergy, nor stigmatised those universal plunderers, the National Assembly, who gorge themselves with eighteen livres a day; which to many of them would, three years ago, have been astonishing opulence.

When you return, I shall lend you three volumes in quarto of another work, with which you will be delighted. They are state-letters in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Mary, Elizabeth, and James; being the correspondence of the Talbot and Howard families, given by a Duke of Norfolk to the Heralds' Office; where they have lain for a century neglected, buried under dust, and unknown, till discovered by a Mr. Lodge, a genealogist, who, to gratify his passion, procured to be made a Poursuivant. Oh! how curious they are! Henry seizes an Alderman who refused to contribute to a benevolence; sends him to the army on the Borders; orders him to be exposed in the front line; and if that does not do, to be treated with the utmost rigour of military discipline. His daughter Bess is not less a Tudor. The mean, unworthy treatment of the Queen of Scots is striking; and you will find how Elizabeth's jealousy of her crown and her avarice were at war, and how the more ignoble passion predominated. But the most amusing passage is one in a private letter, as it paints the awe of children for their parents a *little* differently from modern habitudes. Mr. Talbot, second son of the Earl of Shrewsbury, was a member of the House of Commons, and was married. He writes to the Earl his father, and tells him, that a young woman of a very good character has been recommended to him for chambermaid to his wife, and if his Lordship does not disapprove of it, he will hire her. There are many letters of news, that are very entertaining too—but it is nine o'clock, and I must go to Lady Cecilia's.

WHEN Horace Walpole, who in 1791 had succeeded to the earldom of Orford, died in 1797, he left £4000 apiece to the Misses Berry, besides Little Strawberry Hill. The ladies continued to travel extensively and often leased their inheritance. In 1810, Mary Berry issued in four volumes, annotated by herself, the letters of Madame du Deffand to Walpole, in editing which she destroyed, according to specific testamentary instructions from Walpole, all of his letters to his beloved "debauchée of wit" (some had been destroyed previously by Madame du Deffand herself). Miss Berry did not treat the Frenchwoman kindly: in fact, she seemed inclined to think of Walpole's friend first as a debauchée and then as a wit, writing priggishly that Madame du Deffand "had the disreputable honour of pleasing the Regent Duke of Orléans, and of being, for a short time, the object of his licentious and degrading love."

LAFAYETTE, ON HIS ARRIVAL IN AMERICA, WRITES
HOME OF THIS VERITABLE UTOPIA

[A LETTER TO HIS WIFE]

LAFAYETTE was neither a great soldier nor a great statesman, but he loved liberty. Throughout his life he remained true to the ideals that led to the founding of the United States of America. Through three revolutions—the American War of Independence, the French Revolution, and the Revolution of 1830—he proved that a rich and well-born man could be in the vanguard of progress and enlightenment.

Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, inherited a huge fortune at the age of thirteen. When he was nineteen, a captain of dragoons, the American Revolution broke out. From the beginning his heart was with the Americans. Through Silas Deane, the American agent in France, Lafayette secured a commission as a major general in the American army. He prepared for his departure, gathering companions for the venture. But his friends dissuaded him. Even Benjamin Franklin, who had taken Deane's place as minister to France, tried to talk the young man out of it. Finally, Louis XVI absolutely forbade it.

Undeterred, Lafayette outfitted a frigate and prepared to sail. The frigate was ordered to be seized at the behest of the British minister at Versailles, and Lafayette was placed under arrest. His friends managed to steal the ship from the French port and put in at a near-by Spanish one. Disguised, the valiant Lafayette escaped from custody, fled to Spain, and with eleven companions set sail for America.

After a perilous journey of two months, pursued the while by two British cruisers, Lafayette and his companions landed in South Carolina. His first thoughts were of his wife, Marie Adrienne de Noailles (whom he had married when he was sixteen), and his children. Fearing that his

first letter to his wife might have fallen into British hands, he sent a second :

“In America, there are no poor . . .”

Charleston, June 19, 1777

MY LAST letter to you, my dear love, has informed you that I arrived safely in this country, after having suffered a little from seasickness during the first weeks of the voyage; that I was then, the morning after I landed, at the house of a very kind officer; that I had been nearly two months on the passage, and that I wished to set off immediately. It spoke of everything most interesting to my heart; of my sorrow at parting from you, and of our dear children; and it said, besides, that I was in excellent health. I give you this abstract of it, because the English may possibly amuse themselves by seizing it on its way. I have such confidence in my lucky star, however, that I hope it will reach you. This same star has befriended me, to the astonishment of everybody here. Trust to it yourself and be assured that it ought to calm all your fears. I landed after having sailed several days along a coast which swarmed with hostile vessels. When I arrived, everybody said that my vessel must inevitably be taken, since two British frigates blockaded the harbour. I even went so far as to send orders to the captain, both by land and sea, to put the men on shore and set fire to the ship, if not yet too late. By a most wonderful good fortune, a gale obliged the frigates to stand out to sea for a short time. My vessel came in at noonday, without meeting friend or foe.

At Charleston I have met General Howe, an American officer now in the service. The governor of the state is expected this evening from the country. All with whom I wished to become

acquainted here have shown me the greatest politeness and attention. I feel entirely satisfied with my reception, although I have not thought it best to go into any detail respecting my arrangements and plans. I wish first to see Congress. I hope to set out for Philadelphia in two days. Our route is more than two hundred and fifty leagues by land. We shall divide ourselves into small parties. I have already purchased horses and light carriages for the journey. Some French and American vessels are here and are to sail together tomorrow morning, taking advantage of a moment when the frigates are out of sight. They are armed and have promised me to defend themselves stoutly against the small privateers, which they will certainly meet. I shall distribute my letters among the different ships.

I will now tell you about the country and its inhabitants. They are as agreeable as my enthusiasm had painted them. Simplicity of manners, kindness, love of country and of liberty, and a delightful equality everywhere prevail. The wealthiest man and the poorest are on a level; and, although there are some large fortunes, I challenge anyone to discover the slightest difference between the manners of these two classes respectively toward each other. I first saw the country life at the house of Major Huger. I am now in the city, where everything is very much after the English fashion, except that there is more simplicity, equality, cordiality, and courtesy here than in England. The city of Charleston is one of the handsomest and best built, and its inhabitants among the most agreeable, that I have ever seen. The American women are very pretty, simple in their manners, and exhibit a neatness, which is everywhere cultivated even more studiously than in England. What most charms me is that all the citizens are brethren. In America, there are no poor, nor even what we call peasantry. Each individual has his own honest property and the same rights as the most wealthy landed proprietor. The inns are very different from those of Europe; the host and hostess sit at table with you and do the honours of a comfortable meal; and, on going away, you pay your bill without higgling. When one does not wish to go to an inn, there are country houses where

the title of a good American is a sufficient passport to all those civilities paid in Europe to one's friend.

As to my own reception, it has been most agreeable in every quarter; and to have come with me secures the most flattering welcome. I have just passed five hours at a grand dinner, given in honour of me by an individual of this city. Generals Howe and Moultrie, and several officers of my suite, were present. We drank healths and tried to talk English. I begin to speak it a little. Tomorrow I shall go with these gentlemen to call on the governor of the state and make arrangements for my departure. The next day the commanding officers here will show me the city and its environs, and then I shall set out for the army.

Considering the pleasant life I lead in this country, my sympathy with the people, which makes me feel as much at ease in their society as if I had known them for twenty years, the similarity between their mode of thinking and my own, and my love of liberty and of glory, one might suppose that I am very happy. But you are not with me; my friends are not with me; and there is no happiness for me far from you and them. I ask you, if you still love me; but I put the same question much oftener to myself, and my heart always responds, yes. I am impatient beyond measure to hear from you. I hope to find letters at Philadelphia. My only fear is that the privateer, which is to bring them, may be captured on her passage. Although I suppose I have drawn upon me the special displeasure of the English, by taking the liberty to depart in spite of them, and by landing in their very face, yet I confess they will not be in arrears with me, should they capture this vessel, my cherished hope, on which I so fondly depend for letters from you. Write frequent and long letters. You do not know the full extent of the joy with which I shall receive them. Embrace Henrietta tenderly. May I say embrace tenderly our *children*? The father of these poor children is a rover, but a good and honest man at heart; a good father, who loves his family dearly, and a good husband, who loves his wife with all his heart.

Remember me to your friends and my own, to the dear society, once the society of the court, but which by the lapse of time has

become the society of the *Wooden Sword*. We republicans think it all the better. I must leave off for want of paper and time; and if I do not repeat to you ten thousand times that I love you, it is not from any want of feeling, but from modesty; since I have the presumption to hope that I have already convinced you of it. The night is far advanced and the heat dreadful. I am devoured by insects; so, you see, the best countries have their disadvantages. Adieu.

Lafayette

FROM South Carolina Lafayette proceeded to Philadelphia, where Congress was in session. The nineteen-year-old Lafayette, with his major general's commission, astounded the Congressmen. With Lafayette's avowal that he would serve only as a volunteer and without pay, Congress passed a resolution sustaining his commission.

Though he played no prominent part in battle, Lafayette rendered the new republic other valuable services. In 1779 he returned to France, heading a mission to secure continued aid from his native country. He was eminently successful, and six months later he set sail once more for America, bringing troops, supplies, money, and Comte de Rochambeau. Washington, who had become his great friend, placed Lafayette at the head of a division defending Virginia, and thus the young Frenchman took part in the battle of Yorktown and the surrender of Cornwallis that ended the war.

On Lafayette's last visit to America, in 1824, when he was worn out from his trials during the French Revolution, and no longer the wealthy man he used to be, Congress voted him a grant of \$200,000 and a township of land. He renewed old acquaintanceships, paying tribute at Monticello to his aged friend Jefferson, and toured the young republic for more than a year. Then, sixty-eight years old, he departed for France and for peace and rest. Five years later, revolution once more awakened him to serve freedom.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON DEPLORES THE FALLING OFF OF THE CHARACTER OF CONGRESS

[A LETTER TO GEORGE WASHINGTON]

A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD lad from the West Indies mounted a platform in New York City and stirred his townsmen with a speech about their grievances against Britain. Shortly after, while still a student at King's College (now Columbia University), he wrote two anonymous political pamphlets so brilliant that they were attributed to John Jay. He contributed sharp satires and cool, argumentative articles to the newspapers. At eighteen he was renowned throughout the colonies.

Alexander Hamilton was short, slight, ruddy-complexioned, and a man of great personal charm. When the Revolutionary War opened, he joined the army, soon achieving the rank of captain of artillery. In 1777 he became Washington's aide-de-camp and personal secretary. Washington and Hamilton rapidly developed a close and lasting friendship. During his presidency, Washington depended almost solely on Hamilton for advice. In fact, Hamilton wrote most, if not all, of Washington's Farewell Address.

Just one year after Hamilton joined Washington's personal staff, he could no longer stomach the machinations of the Continental Congress. Hampered by sectionalism and pride in everything they did, the Congressmen managed to aggravate the unhappy condition of the warring nation. In disgust at their carryings-on, Hamilton, already seeing the need for strong centralisation of authority, dispatched this letter to Washington:

“The great men . . . what has become of them?”

February 13, 1778

THERE is a matter, which often obtrudes itself upon my mind, and which requires the attention of every person of sense and influence among us; I mean a degeneracy of representation in the great council of America. It is a melancholy truth, Sir, the effects of which we daily see and feel, that there is not so much wisdom in a certain body as there ought to be, and as the success of our affairs absolutely demands. Many members of it are no doubt men, in every respect, fit for the trust; but this cannot be said of it as a body. Folly, caprice, a want of foresight, comprehension, and dignity, characterise the general tenor of their actions. Of this, I dare say, you are sensible, though you have not perhaps so many opportunities of knowing it as I have. Their conduct, with respect to the army especially, is feeble, indecisive, and improvident; insomuch that we are reduced to a more terrible situation than you can conceive. False and contracted views of economy have prevented them, though repeatedly urged to it, from making that provision for officers, which was requisite to interest them in the service. This has produced such carelessness and indifference to the service, as is subversive to every officer-like quality. They have disgusted the army by repeated instances of the most whimsical favouritism in their promotions; and by an absurd prodigality of rank to foreigners, and to the meanest staff of the army. They have not been able to summon resolution enough to withstand the impudent importunity and vain boasting of foreign pretenders; but have manifested such a ductility and inconstancy in their proceedings, as will warrant the charge of suffering

themselves to be bullied by every petty adventurer, who comes armed with ostentatious pretensions of military merit and experience. Would you believe it, Sir? it is become almost proverbial in the mouths of the French officers and other foreigners, that they have nothing more to do, to obtain whatever they please, than to assume a high tone, and assert their own merit with confidence and perseverance. These things wound my feelings as a republican more than I can express, and in some degree make me contemptible in my own eyes.

America once had a representation, that would do honour to any age or nation. The present falling off is very alarming and dangerous. What is the cause? and How is it to be remedied? are questions that the welfare of these States requires should be well attended to. The great men, who composed our first council,—are they dead, have they deserted the cause, or what has become of them? Very few are dead, and still fewer have deserted the cause; they are all, except the very few who still remain in Congress, either in the field or in the civil offices of their respective States; far the greater part are engaged in the latter. The only remedy then is to take them out of these employments, and return them to the place where their presence is infinitely more important.

Each State, in order to promote its own internal government and prosperity, has selected its best members to fill the offices within itself, and conduct its own affairs. Men have been fonder of the emoluments and conveniences of being employed at home; and local attachment, falsely operating, has made them more provident for the particular interests of the States to which they belonged, than for the common interests of the confederacy. This is a most pernicious mistake, and must be corrected. However important it is to give form and efficiency to your interior constitutions and police; it is infinitely more important to have a wise general council; otherwise a failure of the measures of the Union will overturn all your labours for the advancement of your particular good, and ruin the common cause. You should not beggar the councils of the United States to enrich the administra-

tion of the several members. Realise to yourself the consequences of having a Congress despised at home and abroad. How can the common force be exerted, if the power of collecting it be put in weak, foolish, and unsteady hands? How can we hope for success in our European negotiations, if the nations of Europe have no confidence in the wisdom and vigour of the great Continental government? This is the object on which their eyes are fixed; hence it is, America will derive its importance or insignificance in their estimation.

You and I had some conversation, when I had the pleasure of seeing you last, with respect to the existence of a certain faction. Since I saw you, I have discovered such convincing traits of the monster, that I cannot doubt its reality in the most extensive sense. I dare say you have seen and heard enough to settle the matter in your own mind. I believe it unmasked its batteries too soon, and begins to hide its head; but, as I imagine it will only change the storm to a sap, all the true and sensible friends to their country, and of course to a certain great man, ought to be upon the watch, to counterplot the secret machinations of his enemies.

HAMILTON *has been accused only too often of having been a monarchist and a conspirator against the people. But it was Hamilton who fought for the Constitution, who wrote more than half of the magnificent Federalist papers, and who declared: "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power. . . . Civil liberty cannot possibly have any existence, when the society for whom the laws are made have no share in making them."* What Hamilton believed in was an aristocracy and a strong central government—he feared the excesses of too much democracy; he feared the excesses of the French Revolution.

Through Hamilton the reactionary the Constitution received a liberal

interpretation. When it came to funding the national debt and creating the National Bank, he found their being in the "implied powers" and the "general welfare" clauses of the Constitution. His liberal, democratic opponent, Thomas Jefferson, read no such powers in the document. Jefferson opposed him in all such measures, but when it came to his own presidency, he used those very powers more than ever before. Guizot has written of Hamilton: "There is not in the Constitution of the United States an element of order, of force, of duration, which he did not powerfully contribute to introduce into it and to cause to predominate."

All his life, Hamilton lusted for personal glory, to be a great leader and public figure. Jefferson, during one of Hamilton's visits to him, discovered just what sort of leader Hamilton meant: "The room being hung around with a collection of the portraits of remarkable men, among them being those of Bacon, Newton, and Locke, Hamilton asked me who they were. I told him they were my trinity of the three greatest men the world had ever produced, naming them. He paused for some time. 'The greatest man that ever lived was Julius Cæsar,' he said."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PROPOSES MARRIAGE TO A FRENCH WIDOW

[A LETTER TO MADAME HELVÉTIUS]

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN *has been called "half peasant, half man of the world," but by the time he arrived in France in 1776, to undertake the management of American interests, the man of the world held sway over the peasant. The great world, from Louis XVI down to the most humbly endowed of lionhunting ladies of the salons, opened its jealously guarded portals to the old man. John Adams, who for a time was his colleague, wrote that "Franklin's reputation was more universal than that of Leibnitz or Newton, Frederick or Voltaire; and his character more esteemed and beloved than all of them."*

Franklin took a house at Passy, where, with the help of only two aides (one of them the illegitimate son of his illegitimate son), he boasted that he turned out more work than was done, in an equal space of time, in one of the government offices in Paris where hundreds of clerks were employed. One of his neighbours, at the adjoining village of Auteuil, was Madame Helvétius, the widow of a famous financier, wit, and philosopher. Franklin, who had lost his wife in 1774, felt a mild passion for this charming and cultivated lady, who was herself no longer young. In 1780, when he was seventy-two and she sixty-one, Franklin sent his friend a delightfully unconventional proposal of marriage:

"Let us avenge ourselves."

Passy [January, 1780]

CHAGRINED at your resolution, pronounced so decidedly last evening, to remain single for life, in honour of your dear husband, I went home, fell upon my bed, thought myself dead, and found myself in the Elysian Fields.

They asked me if I had any desire to see any persons in particular. "Lead me to the philosophers." "There are two that reside here in this garden. They are very good neighbours and very friendly to each other." "Who are they?" "Socrates and Helvétius." "I esteem them both prodigiously; but let me see Helvétius first, because I understand a little French and not a word of Greek." He viewed me with much courtesy, having known me, he said, by reputation for some time. He asked me a thousand things about the war, and the present state of religion, liberty and government in France. "You ask me nothing, then, respecting your friend Madame Helvétius, and yet she loves you still excessively; it is but an hour since I was at her house." "Ah!" said he, "you make me recollect my former felicity; but I ought to forget it to be happy here. For many years I thought of nothing but her. At last I am consoled. I have taken another wife, the most like her that I could find. She is not, it is true, quite so handsome; but she has as much good sense and wit, and loves me infinitely. Her continued study is to please me; she is at present gone to look for the best nectar and ambrosia to regale me this evening; stay with me and you will see her."

"I perceive," said I, "that your old friend is more faithful than you; for many good matches have been offered her, all of which

she has refused. I confess to you that I loved her myself to excess; but she was so severe to me, and has absolutely refused me, for love of you." "I commiserate you," said he, "for your misfortune; for indeed she is a good woman, and very amiable. But the Abbé de la Roche and the Abbé Morellet, are they not still sometimes at her house?" "Yes, indeed, for she has not lost a single one of your friends." "If you had gained over the Abbé Morellet with coffee and cream to speak for you, perhaps you would have succeeded, for he is as subtle a reasoner as Scotus or St. Thomas, and puts his arguments in such good order that they become almost irresistible: or if you had secured the Abbé de la Roche, by giving him some fine edition of an old classic, to speak *against* you, that would have been better; for I have always observed that when he advises anything, she has a strong inclination to do the reverse."

At these words the new Madame Helvétius entered with the nectar; I instantly recognised her as Mrs. Franklin, my old American friend. I reclaimed her, but she said to me coldly, "I have been your good wife forty-nine years and four months; almost half a century; be content with that." Dissatisfied with this refusal of my Eurydice I immediately resolved to quit those ungrateful shades and to return to this good world to see again the sun and you. Here I am. Let us avenge ourselves.

MADAME HELVÉTIUS *did not accept Franklin's offer, but she remained his true friend, and there is not the slightest evidence that their relations were strained even momentarily. As Carl Van Doren points out, Franklin was not the stuff from which love's martyrs are made. Their mutual affection deepened with the years, and in 1785, when Franklin was about to sail from Le Havre, he received a letter from Madame Helvétius urging him to return.*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART LEAVES SALZBURG IN A FURY

[A LETTER TO HIS FATHER]

IF MOZART could have always remained a pretty child, going all over creation on concert tours, sitting on the laps of empresses, and playing with archducklings, he might have been happy for ever and aye. Unfortunately, he had to grow up—at least physically, for in some respects he remained childlike and, worse, childish. He lost his dimpled little-boyishness, became a peaked, coltish youth, an infant prodigy grown up. Not everyone knew that the music he was composing was far more important than those fabulous concert tours his vain old father had managed. Of course, some people knew. For instance, Haydn (who recognised his own worth) assured Mozart's father in 1785 that "your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by name."

Unfortunately, Haydn was not Mozart's employer. After returning from his last Italian tour in 1773, the seventeen-year-old genius found himself in bondage to a dull-witted and thoroughly unamiable man by the name of Hieronymus von Colloredo, who happened to be Prince Archbishop of Salzburg. Both the Mozarts, father and son, were attached to his musical establishment, just as they had been attached to that of his predecessor—a pleasant old body who had allowed the Wunderkind and his father to absent themselves as much as they pleased. Archbishop von Colloredo was punctilious about his rights: the Mozarts were his men and, except when the court travelled, they were to stay in Salzburg.

For eight years Colloredo and Mozart played a cat-and-mouse game. Once, when Mozart insisted on a vacation, the Archbishop dismissed him and then, to his chagrin, rescinded the order. Mozart stayed away over fifteen months before returning reluctantly to captivity. For two years

he again endured the routine of court servitude. In 1781, while attending the Archbishop in Vienna, Mozart, who was treated like a lackey, flared up because he was allowed to play only at Colloredo's palace. On May 9, he had a violent interview with the Archbishop:

"He . . . called me a scoundrel, a rascal, a vagabond."

Vienna, May 9, 1781

MY VERY DEAR FATHER:

I am still seething with rage! And you, my dearest and most beloved father, are doubtless in the same condition. My patience has been so long tried that at last it has given out. I am no longer so unfortunate as to be in Salzburg service. Today is a happy day for me. Just listen.

Twice already that—I don't know what to call him—has said to my face the greatest *sottises* and *impertinences*, which I have not repeated to you, as I wished to spare your feelings, and for which I only refrained from taking my revenge on the spot because you, my most beloved father, were ever before my eyes. He called me a rascal and a dissolute fellow and told me to be off. And I—endured it all, although I felt that not only my honour but yours also was being attacked. But, as you would have it so, I was silent. Now listen to this. A week ago the footman came up unexpectedly and told me to clear out that very instant. All the others had been informed of the day of their departure, but not I. Well, I shoved everything into my trunk in haste, and old Madame Weber has been good enough to take me into her house, where I have a pretty room. Moreover, I am living with people who are obliging and who supply me with all the things which one often requires in a hurry and which one cannot have when one is living alone. I decided to travel home by the *ordinaire* on Wednesday, that is,

today, May 9th. But as I could not collect the money still due to me within that time, I postponed my departure until Saturday.

When I presented myself today, the valets informed me that the Archbishop wanted to give me a parcel to take charge of. I asked whether it was urgent. They told me, "Yes, it is of the greatest importance." "Well," said I, "I am sorry that I cannot have the privilege of serving His Grace, for (on account of the reason mentioned above) I cannot leave before Saturday. I have left this house, and must live at my own expense. So it is evident that I cannot leave Vienna until I am in a position to do so. For surely no one will ask me to ruin myself." Kleinmayr, Moll, Bönike and the two valets all said that I was perfectly right. When I went in to the Archbishop—that reminds me, I must tell you first of all that Schlauka advised me to make the excuse that the *ordinaire* was already full, a reason which would carry more weight with him than if I gave him the true one—well, when I entered the room, his first words were:—*Archbishop*: "Well, young fellow, when are you going off?" *I*: "I intended to go tonight, but all the seats were already engaged." Then he rushed full steam ahead, without pausing for breath—I was the most dissolute fellow he knew—no one served him so badly as I did—I had better leave today or else he would write home and have my salary stopped.

I couldn't get a word in edgeways, for he blazed away like a fire. I listened to it all very calmly. He lied to my face that my salary was five hundred gulden, called me a scoundrel, a rascal, a vagabond. Oh, I really cannot tell you all he said. At last my blood began to boil, I could not longer contain myself and I said, "So Your Grace is not satisfied with me?" "What, you dare to threaten me—you scoundrel? There is the door! Look out, for I will have nothing more to do with such a miserable wretch." At last I said: "Nor I with you!" "Well, be off!" When leaving the room, I said, "This is final. You shall have it tomorrow in writing."

Tell me now, most beloved father, did I not say the word too late rather than too soon? Just listen for a moment. My honour is more precious to me than anything else and I know that it is

so to you also. Do not be the least bit anxious about me. I am so sure of my success in Vienna that I would have resigned even without the slightest reason; and now that I have a very good reason—and that too thrice over—I cannot make a virtue of it. *Au contraire*, I had twice played the coward and I could not do so a third time.

As long as the Archbishop remains here, I shall not give a concert. You are altogether mistaken if you think that I shall get a bad name with the Emperor and the nobility, for the Archbishop is detested here and most of all by the Emperor. In fact, he is furious because the Emperor did not invite him to Laxenburg. By the next post I shall send you a little money to show you that I am not starving. Now please be cheerful, for my good luck is just beginning, and I trust that my good luck will be yours also. Write to me in cipher that you are pleased—and indeed you may well be so—but in public rail at me as much as you like, so that none of the blame may fall on you. But if, in spite of this, the Archbishop should be the slightest bit impertinent to you, come at once with my sister to Vienna, for I give you my word of honour that there is enough for all three of us to live on. Still, I should prefer it if you could hold out for another year. Do not send any more letters to the Deutsches Haus, nor enclose them in their parcels—I want to hear nothing more about Salzburg. I hate the Archbishop to madness.

Adieu. I kiss your hands a thousand times and embrace my dear sister with all my heart and am ever your obedient son

W. A. Mozart

Just address your letters:

To be delivered Auf dem Peter, im Auge Gottes, 2nd Floor.

Please inform me soon of your approval, for that is the only thing which is still wanting to my present happiness. Adieu.

THIS letter was Mozart's bid for moral support from his father. Instead, Leopold Mozart, who remained a toady to the end of his days, called on his son to submit. But Mozart was determined to be free and, after waiting a full month for Colloredo to answer his letter of resignation, went around to the palace and was kicked out of the Archbishop's antechamber by Count Arco, his ruffianly chamberlain. Mozart not incorrectly interpreted this overt act as a token that Colloredo had accepted his resignation.

During his remaining decade of life Mozart did not always have the security that his job with the Archbishop had given him. In fact, he had his fat and lean periods, with rather more of the latter than the former. The Emperor Joseph II gave him a badly paid court post, and Leopold II, his successor, did not deign to reappoint him. Mozart died of overwork and malnutrition.

Apart from being a supreme musical genius, Mozart, by his determined opposition to Colloredo, struck a blow—unconsciously—for the recognition of the artist as the equal of personages of the highest rank. The full repercussions of his staunch insistence upon his rights did not come until forty years later, when Goethe and Beethoven met at the fashionable watering place of Töplitz. There Goethe, who had been born seven years before Mozart, “stood aside, hat in hand, as his royal friends passed. Not so Beethoven, who “with folded arms walked right through the dukes and only tilted his hat slightly while the dukes stepped aside to make room for him, and all greeted him pleasantly.”

So wrote Bettina Brentano von Arnim. Goethe, who had given his genius plenty of energy on which to grow by the simple expedient of conforming superficially to the old order of things, commented dryly on Beethoven's behaviour: “His talent amazed me; unfortunately he is an utterly untamed personality, not altogether wrong in holding the world to be detestable, but who does not make it any the more enjoyable either for himself or others by his attitude.”

WILLIAM COWPER PONDERES A POINT IN ANTHRO- POLOGY

[A LETTER TO THE REVEREND JOHN NEWTON]

WHEN Lytton Strachey was twenty-five years old, he wrote a series of witty exercises on the great English letter writers. As he was already the very clever man he was to remain, but not quite the wise man he was to become, he wrote two or three gently sneering pages in praise of the letters of William Cowper. "As far as they go," he wrote, "they are perfect, but they hardly go anywhere at all. . . . They are like soap-bubbles—exquisite films surrounding emptiness, and almost too wonderful to be touched. . . . Cowper had nothing to say, and he said it beautifully."

This, too, is perfect—as far as it goes: it is a pretty exercise in the half-truth which Strachey, in his maturity, would have been loath to sign. Saintsbury puts the case so much more fairly: ". . . there is certainly no other epistoler who has displayed such consummate (if also such unconscious) art in making the most out of the least." In few letters is the matter more trite; in few letters is the manner less. There is no use pretending that there is anything here for people who insist upon important names and big events. Cowper lived an everyday life—he puttered around from one year to the next, and his letters record, in general, the details of this puttering.

It so happens that Cowper was occasionally quite technically insane. The letters scarcely hint that fact—a shadow falls on the page, and that is all. It so happens, too, that Cowper wrote a large amount of verse, some of it enduring poetry, but all unwound in an idiomatic English of startling freshness. Talk of poetry is often the matter of his letters, and he usually writes of it with the common sense of the practitioner and the passion of the devotee. But most of the letters are about nothing

more important than "domestic nothings . . . light, intimate confidences . . . tea parties, his digestion, or his money matters." As a philosopher, he is fanciful rather than deep, speculation quickly shallowing, delightfully, into playfulness, with a mixture of the blithe and the melancholy that gives poignancy to even his briefest letters.

In the following letter, written in his fifty-third year, Cowper's fancy plays on the descent of man :

"We sleep in a whole skin . . ."

February 10, 1784

MY DEAR FRIEND:

The morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits. So much the worse for my correspondents. Sleep, that refreshes my body, seems to cripple me in every other respect. As the evening approaches, I grow more alert, and when I am retiring to bed, am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time. So it fares with us whom they call nervous. By a strange inversion of the animal economy, we are ready to sleep when we have most need to be awake, and go to bed just when we might sit up to some purpose. The watch is irregularly wound up, it goes in the night when it is not wanted, and in the day stands still.

In many respects we have the advantage of our forefathers the Picts. We sleep in a whole skin, and are not obliged to submit to the painful operation of puncturing ourselves from head to foot, in order that we may be decently dressed, and fit to appear abroad. But on the other hand, we have reason enough to envy them their tone of nerves, and that flow of spirits which effectually secured them from all uncomfortable impressions of a gloomy atmosphere, and from every shade of melancholy from every other cause. They

understood, I suppose, the use of vulnerary herbs, having frequent occasion for some skill in surgery; but physicians, I presume they had none, having no need of any.

Is it possible, that a creature like myself can be descended from such progenitors, in whom there appears not a single trace of family resemblance? What an alteration have a few ages made! They, without clothing, would defy the severest season; and I, with all the accommodations that art has since invented, am hardly secure even in the mildest. If the wind blows upon me when my pores are open, I catch cold. A cough is the consequence. I suppose if such a disorder could have seized a Pict, his friends would have concluded that a bone had stuck in this throat, and that he was in some danger of choking. They would perhaps have addressed themselves to the cure of his cough by thrusting their fingers into his gullet, which would only have exasperated the case. But they would never have thought of administering laudanum, my only remedy.

For this difference however that has obtained between me and my ancestors, I am indebted to the luxurious practices, and enfeebling self-indulgence, of a long line of grandsires, who from generation to generation have been employed in deteriorating the breed, till at last the collected effects of all their follies have centred in my puny self,—a man indeed, but not in the image of those who went before me;—a man, who sighs and groans, who wears out life in dejection and oppression of spirits, and who never thinks of the aborigines of the country to which he belongs, without wishing that he had been born among them. The evil is without a remedy, unless the ages that are passed could be recalled, my whole pedigree be permitted to live again, and being properly admonished to beware of enervating sloth and refinement, would preserve their hardiness of nature unimpaired, and transmit the desirable quality to their posterity.

I once saw Adam in a dream. We sometimes say of a picture, that we doubt not its likeness to the original, though we never saw him; a judgment we have some reason to form, when the face is strongly charactered, and the features full of expression.

So I think to my visionary Adam, and for a similar reason. His figure was awkward indeed in the extreme. It was evident that he had never been taught by a Frenchman to hold his head erect, or to turn out his toes; to dispose gracefully of his arms, or to simper without a meaning. But if Mr. Bacon was called upon to produce a statue of Hercules, he need not wish for a juster pattern. He stood like a rock; the size of his limbs, the prominence of his muscles, and the height of his stature, all conspired to bespeak him a creature whose strength had suffered no diminution; and who, being the first of his race, did not come into the world under a necessity of sustaining a load of infirmities, derived to him from the intemperance of others. He was as much stouter than a Pict, as I suppose a Pict to have been than I.

Upon my hypothesis, therefore, there has been a gradual declension, in point of bodily vigour, from Adam down to me: at least if my dream were a just representation of that gentleman, and deserve the credit I cannot help giving it, such must have been the case.—Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

EXCEPT for his insanity, Cowper led a completely uneventful life. *He tells about it in his letters, "as it ought to be told, as it alone can be told, in the purest of English and with the sweetest of smiles," said Augustine Birrell. "For a combination of delightful qualities, Cowper's letters have no rivals. They are playful, witty, loving, sensible, ironical, and, above all, as easy as an old shoe." Add that they are always humane. It is easy to believe that they were written by a man of sound physical health—almost impossible to believe that the same healthy man firmly believed that he was doomed to eternal damnation.*

GILBERT WHITE WRITES THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HIS PET TORTOISE

[A LETTER TO HIS NIECE]

GILBERT WHITE was an indolent clergyman who lived through seventy-three years of the eighteenth century. He might have risen high in the Church, but his one ambition was to live quietly at Selborne, the ancestral seat of his family, to observe nature, to record the antiquities of his parish, and, finally, to serve dutifully—if rather incidentally—as its rector. The result of this circumscribed way of life was *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, the only work on natural history ever to be acclaimed undisputedly an English classic.

His famous tortoise Timothy was a beast of very considerable age when he was inherited by White. Writing to his friend Daines Barrington, on October 8, 1770, from his Aunt Rebecca Snooke's house at Lewes, the naturalist spoke of it as having "been kept for thirty years in a little walled court belonging to the house where I am now visiting." He continued to give Barrington occasional information—much of it as droll as it is instructive—about Timothy until April 21, 1780, when he speaks of the reptile as having become his own property. On that date its torpid, sluggish condition moved him to wonder that "Providence should bestow such a profusion of days, such a seeming waste of longevity, on a reptile that appears to relish it so little as to squander more than two-thirds of its existence in a joyless stupor, and be lost to all sensation for months together in the profoundest of slumbers."

In 1784 Timothy received a fan letter—in verse—from a young lady by the name of Hester ("Necky") Mulso, the niece of a similarly named lady whom Gilbert White is said to have wooed in vain and who became, under her married name of Mrs. Chapone, a noted blue-stocking and a force in the

*education of "elegant females".** As Timothy could not reply, White undertook to act as his proxy:

" . . . many agreeable tortoises of both sexes . . . "

Selborne, August 31, 1784

MOST RESPECTABLE LADY:

Your letter gave me great satisfaction, being the first that ever I was honoured with. It is my wish to answer you in your own way; but I never could make a verse in my life, so you must be contented with plain prose. Having seen but little of this great world, conversed but little and read less, I feel myself much at a loss how to entertain so intelligent a correspondent. Unless you will let me write about myself, my answer will be very short indeed.

Know, then, that I am an American, and was born in the year 1734 in the Province of Virginia, in the midst of a savanna that lay between a large tobacco plantation and a creek of the sea. Here I spent my youthful days among my relations with much satisfaction, and saw around me many venerable kinsmen, who had attained to great ages, without any interruption from distempers. Longevity is so general among our species that a funeral is quite a strange occurrence. I can just remember the death of my great-great-grandfather, who departed this life in the 160th year of his age. Happy should I have been in the enjoyment of my native climate, and the society of my friends, had not a sea-boy, who was wandering about to see what he could pick up, surprised me as I was sunning myself under a bush; and whipping me into his wallet, carried me aboard his ship. The circumstances of our voyage are

* Every reader of *Vanity Fair* will remember that Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, from which both Rebecca Sharp and Amelia Sedley were graduated, was honoured by the patronage of the "admirable" Mrs. Chapone.

not worthy a recital; I only remember that the rippling of the water against the sides of our vessel as we sailed along was a very lulling and composing sound, which served to soothe my slumbers as I lay in the hold. We had a short voyage, and came to anchor on the coast of England in the harbour of Chichester. In that city my kidnapper sold me for half-a-crown to a country gentleman, who came up to attend an election. I was immediately packed in a hand-basket, and carried, slung by the servant's side, to their place of abode. As they rode very hard for forty miles, and I had never been on horseback before, I found myself somewhat giddy from my airy jaunt. My purchaser, who was a great humorist, after showing me to some of his neighbours, and giving me the name of Timothy, took little further notice of me; so I fell under the care of his lady, a benevolent woman, whose humane attention extended to the meanest of her retainers.

With this gentlewoman I remained almost forty years, living in a little walled-in court in the front of her house, and enjoying much quiet, and as much satisfaction as I could expect without society. At last this good old lady died in a very advanced old age, such as a tortoise would call a good old age; and I then became the property of her nephew. This man, my present master, dug me out of my winter retreat, and packing me in a deal box, jumbled me eighty miles in postchaises to my present place of abode. I was sore shaken by this expedition, which was the worst journey I ever experienced. In my present situation I enjoy many advantages—such as the range of an extensive garden, affording a variety of sun and shade, and abounding in lettuces, poppies, kidney beans, and many other salubrious and delectable herbs and plants, and especially with a great choice of delicate gooseberries! But still at times I miss my good old mistress, whose grave and regular deportment suited best with my disposition. For you must know that my master is what they call a naturalist, and much visited by people of that turn, who often put him on whimsical experiments, such as feeling my pulse, putting me in a tub of water to try if I can swim, etc., and twice in the year I am carried to the grocer's to be weighed, that it may be seen

how much I am wasted during the months of my abstinence, and how much I gain by feasting in the summer. Upon these occasions I am placed in the scale on my back, where I sprawl about to the great diversion of the shopkeeper's children. These matters displease me; but there is another that much hurts my pride; I mean that contempt shown for my understanding which these lords of the creation are very apt to discover, thinking that nobody knows anything but themselves. I heard my master say that he expected that I should some day tumble down the ha-ha; whereas I would have him to know that I can discern a precipice from plain ground as well as himself. Sometimes my master repeats with much seeming triumph the following lines, which occasion a loud laugh:

*Timotheus placed on high
Amidst the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touched the lyre.*

For my part I see no wit in the application, nor know whence the verses are quoted, perhaps from some prophet of his own, who, if he penned them for the sake of ridiculing tortoises, bestowed his pains, I think, to poor purposes. These are some of my grievances; but they sit very light on me in comparison of what remains behind. Know, then, tender-hearted lady, that my greatest misfortune, and what I have never divulged to anyone before, is the want of society of my own kind. This reflection is always uppermost in my mind, but comes upon me with irresistible force every spring. It was in the month of May last, that I resolved to elope from my place of confinement, for my fancy had represented to me that probably many agreeable tortoises of both sexes might inhabit the heights of Baker's Hill, of the extensive plains of the neighbouring meadow, both of which I could discern from the terrace. One sunny morning, therefore, I watched my opportunity, found the wicket open, eluded the vigilance of Thomas Hoar, and escaped into the saintfoin, which began to be in bloom, and thence into the beans. I was missing eight days, wandering in this wilderness of sweets, and exploring

the meadow at times. But my pains were all to no purpose; I could find no society such as I wished and sought for. I began to grow hungry, and to wish myself at home. I therefore came forth in sight, and surrendered myself up to Thomas, who had been inconsolable in my absence. Thus, Madam, have I given you a faithful account of my satisfactions and sorrows, the latter of which are mostly uppermost. You are a lady, I understand, of much sensibility. Let me therefore make my case your own in the following manner, and then you will judge of my feelings. Suppose you were to be kidnapped away tomorrow, in the bloom of your life, to the land of Tortoises, and were never to see again for fifty years a human face!!! Think on this, dear lady, and pity

Your sorrowful Reptile,

Timothy

IN ONE respect, at least, Timothy came to more posthumous notice than his owner. Gilbert White rests in the parish church of Selborne, while Timothy's shell is on view at the British Museum.

CH'IENT LUNG, EMPEROR OF CHINA, REFUSES GREAT BRITAIN'S DEMAND FOR COMMERCIAL CON- CESSIONS

[A LETTER TO GEORGE III]

CH'IENT LUNG was one of the most prolific poets of all time. He wrote 34,000 poems. Nevertheless, his fame and glory rest on his reign in China: Ch'ien Lung united all of China and a great part of Turkestan. From his accession to the dragon throne to his abdication sixty years later, this greatest of Manchu emperors waged unremitting war with hostile and barbaric tribes until he had succeeded in controlling not only the state but the Tibetan church. Though religious, Ch'ien Lung sought to place the lamas under his thumb. To the Tashi lama he extended an invitation to come to his summer palace in Jehol. The lama hesitated and, after many feigned starts, was compelled to set out for Jehol. After a splendid reception, His Holiness visited the capital at Peking. He died suddenly. Ch'ien Lung had undoubtedly had him poisoned. The Dalai lama proved more tractable.

A clever statesman, Ch'ien Lung was also a scholar and an artist. During his reign the arts flourished; he introduced the Greek ideal into Chinese architecture. The wealth of China was too tantalising to Occidentals for them to resist its temptations. The East India Company saw China as a veritable paradise for its Clives and Hastings. At the instance and expense of the Company, George III sent an embassy, headed by Lord Macartney, to negotiate trade agreements. It reached Jehol just in time for the celebration of Ch'ien Lung's eighty-third birthday. The Emperor, exulting in his recent military victories, received the British envoys with affability and marvelled that a great monarch of the far West should pay him homage. In high spirits, Ch'ien Lung shocked his court by permitting Macartney to kneel on only one knee instead of

prostrating himself nine times according to prescribed Chinese etiquette.

The embassy presented its demands to Ch'ien Lung for trade concessions. Macartney described the Emperor's government: "Indeed, the machinery and authority of the Government are so organised and so powerful as almost immediately to surmount every difficulty and to produce every effect that human strength can accomplish." Is it any wonder, then, that the all-powerful Ch'ien Lung, also having the opportunity to see what concessions did for neighbouring India, scotched the British plans?

*" . . . by perpetual submission to our throne, you
may secure peace . . . "*

[1793]

YOU, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilisation, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. Your envoy has crossed the seas and paid his respects at my court on the anniversary of my birthday. To show your devotion you have also sent offerings of your country's produce.

I have perused your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy. In consideration of the fact that your ambassador and his deputy have come a long way with your memorial and tribute I have showed them high favour and have allowed them to be introduced into my presence. To manifest my indulgence I have entertained them at a banquet and made them many gifts. I have also caused presents to be forwarded to the Naval Commander and six hundred of his officers and men, although they did not come to Peking, so that they too may share in my all-embracing kindness.

As to your entreaty to send one of your nationals to be accredited to my Celestial Court and to be in control of your country's trade with China, this request is contrary to all usage in my dynasty and cannot possibly be entertained. It is true that Europeans, in the service of the dynasty, have been permitted to live at Peking, but they are compelled to adopt Chinese dress, they are strictly confined to their own precincts and are never permitted to return home. You are presumably familiar with our dynastic regulations. Your proposed envoy to my Court could not be placed in a position similar to that of European officials in Peking who are forbidden to leave China, nor could he, on the other hand, be allowed liberty of movement and the privilege of corresponding with his own country; so that you would gain nothing by his residence in our midst.

Moreover our Celestial dynasty possesses vast territories, and tribute missions from the dependencies are provided for by the Department for Tributary States, which ministers to their wants and exercises strict control over their movements. It would be quite impossible to leave them to their own devices. Supposing that your envoy should come to our Court, his language and national dress differ from that of our people, and there would be no place in which to bestow him. It may be suggested that he might imitate the Europeans permanently resident in Peking and adopt the dress and customs of China, but it has never been our dynasty's wish to force people to do things unseemly and inconvenient. Besides, suppose I sent an ambassador to reside in your country, how could you possibly make for him the requisite arrangements? Europe consists of many other nations besides your own: if each and all demanded to be represented at our Court, how could we possibly consent? The thing is utterly impracticable. How can our dynasty alter its whole procedure and system of etiquette, established for more than a century, in order to meet your individual views? . . .

If you assert that your reverence for our Celestial dynasty fills you with a desire to acquire our civilisation, our ceremonies and code of laws differ so completely from your own that, even if

your envoy were able to acquire the rudiments of our civilisation, you could not possibly transplant our manners and customs to your alien soil. Therefore, however adept the envoy might become, nothing would be gained thereby.

Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfil the duties of the state: strange and costly objects do not interest me. If I have commanded that the tribute offerings sent by you, O King, are to be accepted, this was solely in consideration for the spirit which prompted you to dispatch them from afar. Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated into every country under heaven, and kings of all nations have offered their costly tribute by land and sea. As your ambassador can see for himself we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange and ingenious; and have no use for your country's manufactures. This then is my answer to your request to appoint a representative at my Court, a request contrary to our dynastic usage, which could only result in inconvenience to yourself. I have expounded my wishes in detail and have commanded your tribute envoys to leave in peace on their homeward journeys. It behooves you, O King, to respect my sentiments and to display even greater devotion and loyalty in future, so that, by perpetual submission to our throne, you may secure peace and prosperity for your country hereafter. Besides making gifts (of which I enclose an inventory) to each member of your mission, I confer upon you, O King, valuable presents in excess of the number bestowed on such occasions, including silks and curios—a list of which is likewise enclosed. Do you reverently receive them and take note of my tender good will toward you!

ARNOLD TOYNBEE, in *A Study of History*, says: "It seems scarcely credible to us, here and now, that a Manchu philosopher-king, receiving a plain announcement of the approaching impact of the West newly armed with the tremendous weapons of Industrialism, should have shown himself so blind to the signs of the times." Toynbee then goes on to suggest that a contemporary Western statesman would have done the same thing.

Ch'ien Lung, however, did not live to see foreign penetration into China. In 1796, he willingly abdicated the throne to his fifteenth son and retired to his palace to read and to relax. But before he abdicated, he had the opportunity of receiving another commercial embassy to his court, this time from Holland. Court etiquette was not dispensed with this time and, contrary to Eastern dignity, when the fat Dutchman tried valiantly to prostrate himself, Ch'ien Lung burst out in laughter.

CAMILLE DESMOULINS BIDS FAREWELL TO HIS WIFE ON THE EVE OF HIS EXECUTION

DESMOULINS roused the people of France to their blood lust during the Revolution. When he finally realised the horror of their doings, it was too late to save even himself. Through his pamphlets and his journal, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, he typified the maddened crowd, seeking out revolutionary heresies and exposing his enemies. To Saint-Beuve he is a "political agitator": "Have you ever seen those impudent urchins, striding boldly along in front of a regimental band, and who mimic the fifer and the drummer, and especially the man with the big drum? Camille Desmoulins is the sham fifer of the Revolution, who makes merry till the day when he learns, to his own cost, that we cannot play with impunity with the tiger."

Desmoulins' career as the "agitator" began on July 12, 1789. In a café outside the Palais-Royal, Desmoulins leaped upon a table, announced Louis XVI's dismissal of Necker, drew his pistols, hoisted a cockade, shouted "To arms!" and raced out into the street, followed by the furious crowd. As they made their way along the streets, they increased in number, looted, pillaged, and stormed shops and homes, to gather any available weapons. Two days later, on July 14, they stormed the Bastille.

Then this "brightest, maddest, and most skilful" Desmoulins began his pamphleteering and journalistic career. Robespierre, his old school friend, called him a "spoiled child". Mirabeau, his patron, said he could be "easily won over by money". André Chénier, who had been attacked in Desmoulins' journal, dismissed him as "too well known to be dangerous; even among his so-called partisans he is merely looked upon as a buffoon, who at times can be diverting enough; his friends despise him, and their contempt is even greater than that of his enemies, for his friends know him better." All but Robespierre reckoned without the man. His influence made itself felt. He viciously exulted in his bloody triumphs, this "cruel urchin".

When, in October, 1793, the Girondists were executed, Desmoulins had a change of heart. No longer could he follow the giddy pace of the Reign of Terror. In December, he began writing the first numbers of his new journal, *Le Vieux Cordelier*. Despite his labelling the despicable Marat "divine", he launched a plea for peace. "I was a brigand," he wrote, "and I glory in it." But, "I think quite differently from those who say that the Terror should be considered as the order of the day. On the contrary, I believe that our freedom would be consolidated and Europe vanquished if you had a Committee of Clemency." Again: "Liberty is not a nymph of the opera, nor a red cap, nor a dirty shirt, nor rags. Liberty is happiness and reason. . . . Do you wish me to recognise her, to fall at her feet, and shed my blood for her? Open the prison doors to the two hundred thousand citizens whom you please to call 'suspects'."

At Robespierre's orders, Desmoulins and all other moderates, including Danton, were arrested. Brought to trial, Desmoulins and the rest could not defend themselves. Asked his age, he replied, "I am thirty-three [he was thirty-four], the age of the sans-culotte Jesus, a critical age for every patriot." The Revolutionary Tribunal condemned them all to death. During his trial, a day before sentence was passed, he wrote to his wife Lucile, whom he had married during the Revolution:

*“ . . . I was born to make verses and to defend
the unfortunate.”*

On the 2nd Germinal, the II Decade,
at 5 o'clock in the morning April 1, 1794

BENEFACTANT slumber has helped me to obliterate my sufferings. When one sleeps, one has not the feeling of being in prison, one is free. Heaven had mercy on me. Only a moment ago, I saw you in my dream, I embraced you one after another. . . . Our little one had lost an eye, and I saw it in a bandage. And in my distress at this, I woke up. I found myself in my dungeon. Day was dawning. I saw you no more, my Lolotte, and could not hear you, for you and your mother, you had spoken to me, and Horace, without feeling his pain, had said, “Papa, papa.” Oh, these cruel ones, who deprive me of the joy to hear these words, to see you and to make you happy. For that was my only ambition and my only conspiracy. . . .

I have discovered a crack in my cell. I put my ear to it and heard a sigh. I hazarded a few words and heard the voice of a sick man suffering. He asked me for my name, which I told him. “My God!” he exclaimed as he sank back on his couch. “I am Fabre d’Eglantine. But you are here? Has, then, the counter-revolution been successful?” We did not dare to talk with one another, in order that hatred might not deprive us of the poor consolation and so that one might not hear us and separate us from one another, to place us in still closer confinement. Beloved, you cannot imagine what it means to be in the dark, without knowing the reason, without being interrogated, without a single newspaper. It means at the same time living and being dead. Or alive and to feel oneself in a coffin. They say that

innocence is at rest and full of courage. Oh, my precious Lucile, that would be true, if one were God.

At this moment the Commissaries of the Republic came to interrogate me, whether I had conspired against the Republic. How ridiculous! How can they so insult the purest Republicism! I see the fate which awaits me. Farewell, my precious Lucile, my Lolotte, say farewell to my father for me. You see in me an example of the barbarity and ingratitude of man. As you see, my fear was well founded, my premonition right every time. But my last moments shall not dishonour you. I was the husband of a woman of divine virtue, I was a good husband, a good son, I would also have been a good father. I follow my brothers who have died for the Republic. I am certain to take with me the esteem and pity of all friends of virtue, of freedom, and of truth. I die at thirty-four years of age, and yet it is a miracle that I have passed through so many pitfalls of the Revolution during five years, and that I am still alive.

I rest my head with confidence on the pillow of my all too numerous writings, but they all breathe the same love of humanity, the same wish, to make my fellow citizens free and happy, those whom the axe of Saint-Just will not fall upon. I see that power intoxicates almost all men and that they will say with Dionysius of Syracuse, "Tyranny is a beautiful gift." However, console yourself, disconsolate widow, Hector's widow, for the inscription on the grave of your unhappy Camille is more glorious: it is that of Cato and Brutus, the murderers of tyrants.

My beloved Lucile, I was born to make verses and to defend the unfortunate. In this hall, where I fight now for my life, I defended four years ago for whole nights a mother of ten children, who could find no advocate. In front of the same bench of jurors, who now murder me, I once appeared, when my father had already lost a great lawsuit, suddenly like a miracle in the midst of the judges. Then at least weeping was no crime. My emotional speech knew how to move them, and I won the case, which my father had already lost. Such a conspirator am I! I never was any other. I was born in order to make you happy, in order to create for us

both, with your mother and my father and some intimate friends, a Tahiti. I dreamed the dreams of the Abbé Saint-Pierre. I dreamed of a republic, the idol of all men; I could not believe that men are so unjust and so cruel. How could I imagine that a jovial allusion toward colleagues in my writings could obliterate so many services? I do not conceal from myself that I fall as victim of those pleasantries and of my friendship for the unfortunate Danton. I thank my murderers for this death with him. . . .

My colleagues, my friends, the whole "mountain", which, with the exception of a few, have encouraged me, congratulated me, kissed me, pressed my hand in thanks, have been so cowardly as to desert me. Those who have said so much to me, and even those who condemned my newspaper, none of them can seriously consider me a conspirator. The freedom of the press and opinion has no longer any defenders, we will die as the last republicans, even though we had to pierce ourselves with our own swords like Cato, if there had been no guillotine.

Pardon me, my dear one, my true life, that I lost when we were separated, for occupying myself with memory. I had far better busy myself in making you forget. My Lucile, my dear Louploup, my darling, I implore you, do not call upon me; your cries will rend my heart even at the bottom of my grave. Care for your little one; live for my Horace; speak to him of me. Tell him hereafter what he cannot now understand, that I should have loved him well. Notwithstanding my punishment, I believe there is a God. My blood will wash out my faults, my human weakness, and for the good I have done, for my virtues, my love of Liberty, God will reward me. I shall see you again one day. O Lucile! . . . Feeling as I do, is death so great a misfortune, since it delivers me from the sight of so many enemies?

Good-bye, Louploup, my life, my soul, my heaven on earth! I leave you to good friends—all the sensible and virtuous men who remain. Good-bye—Lucile, my Lucile, my dear Lucile. . . . The shores of life recede from me. I see you still, Lucile, my beloved. My bound hands embrace you, and my head as it falls rests its dying eyes upon you.

THE day after, he was beheaded by the guillotine. "I shall die," he had written before his arrest, "with the opinion that to render the republic of France happy and flourishing, a little ink and one guillotine would have sufficed."

A week later, his wife was also fed to the guillotine. Convicted of trying to arrange her husband's escape and of plotting the downfall of the republic, Lucile Desmoulins went to her death more calmly than Camille. Of the sixty who had witnessed their marriage contract, only one remained free—Robespierre—and he not for long.

CHARLES LAMB, AFTER HIS SISTER MARY HAS MURDERED THEIR MOTHER, BEGS SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE FOR THE CONSOLATIONS OF RELIGION

[AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS]

CHARLES LAMB'S *correspondence is an unrivalled source for his life story after his coming of age. On May 27, 1796, in his first extant letter, he writes blithely to Coleridge, married little more than a year and still struggling to make ends meet: "Coleridge, I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol—my life has been somewhat diversified of late. The 6 weeks that finished last year and began this your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad house at Hoxton—I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite anyone. But mad I was—and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume if all told."*

There was insanity in Lamb's family. His father sank into dotage—if nothing worse—before his death, and his mother was quite definitely unbalanced. There is no evidence that, except for that brief seizure late in 1795 and early in 1796, Lamb was ever again affected. But almost four months to a day after his first letter to Coleridge, he wrote to his friend the news of another outbreak of mental illness in his family:

*“I was at hand . . . to snatch the knife out of
her grasp.”*

[September 27, 1796]

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

White or some of my friends or the public papers by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines. My poor dear dearest sister in a fit of insanity has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a mad house, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses,—I eat and drink and sleep, and have my judgment I believe very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris of the Bluecoat school has been very kind to us, and we have no other friend, but thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write,—as religious a letter as possible—but no mention of what is gone and done with—with me the former things are passed away, and I have something more to do than [than] to feel —

God almighty

have us all in
his keeping.—

C. Lamb

mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you, you [your] own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife.—You

look after your family,—I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God almighty love you and all of us——

THE tragedy had occurred on September 22, so it can be seen that Lamb waited five days before writing to Coleridge for religious consolation. Three days before, on the nineteenth, Mrs. Coleridge had given birth to their first child, Hartley, about whom Wordsworth wrote so rapturously and who was to be more ill-fated than his father. Coleridge, in the midst of this new domestic situation, with pressing demands on his ill-budgeted time and empty purse, turned aside to write to his friend one of the great devotional letters in the language. Its spirituality and over-reaching faith remind us that in the great crises of his own life he resorted naturally to prayer:

“It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream . . .”

[September 28, 1796]

YOUR letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupefied my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter; I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms, like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy, that your faith

in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to "his God and your God", the God of mercies, and father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds, and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror, by the glories of God manifest, and the hallelujahs of angels.

As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man, called by sorrow and anguish and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God; we cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ. And they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of his character, and bowed down and crushed under foot, cry in fullness of faith, 'Father, thy will be done.'

I wish above measure to have you for a little while here—no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings—you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair—you are a temporary sharer in human miseries, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

I remain, your affectionate,

S. T. Coleridge

THE results of Mary Lamb's violence were less serious than were at first anticipated. She was put under restraint after a verdict of temporary insanity had been pronounced, but soon Charles was able, with the aid of powerful friends, to secure her release with the stipulation that he take her into his personal custody and remove her to a madhouse when he detected signs of mania. After the spring of 1799, when Lamb's father died of senile decay, brother and sister were never again parted except during her occasional lapses. The odd thing was that this situation, instead of acting as an excitant to the nervous, highstrung, and delicately balanced Lamb, actually seemed to be a stabiliser. Even after 1827, when Mary Lamb's attacks became more and more frequent, necessitating residence in the country, where her brother, cut off from the society of his friends, had altogether too much opportunity for introspection, he did not fall into hopeless melancholy, though he certainly felt lonely and forlorn.

It is perhaps worth recording that less than a month after receiving Coleridge's letter, Lamb—as a Unitarian—began to question its theology. He thought his deeply religious friend (who would have been a heretic if judged by the letter of any creed) lacking in humility.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE AND FRIEDRICH
VON SCHILLER DISCUSS THE PROGRESS OF *FAUST*

[AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS]

“**V**OILÀ UN HOMME!” *The words are Napoleon’s about Goethe, but they might have been Schiller’s. “It is not the greatness of his intellect,” he wrote when they were friends, “which binds me to him. If he were not as a man more admirable than any I have ever known, I should only marvel at his genius from the distance.”*

Schiller had first met Goethe when he was a college student and Goethe already a well-known poet. Their next meeting occurred in 1788, after Goethe, flushed with the beauty of classicism, returned from Italy to Weimar. Schiller, in a letter to a friend, doubted if he and Goethe would ever become really friends. “At last I can tell you about Goethe,” he wrote. “We soon made acquaintance, and without the slightest effort; the circle, indeed, was large, and everyone too jealous of him, for me to speak much with him alone. . . . I must say that my great idea of him is not lessened by this personal acquaintance; but I doubt whether we shall ever become intimate. Much that to me is now of great interest, he has already lived through; he is, less in years than in experience and self-culture, so far beyond me that we can never meet on the way.” Goethe, on his side, did not see possibilities for a lasting friendship. Schiller was immersed in the Sturm und Drang of German literature, a movement Goethe completely veered away from on his return to Germany. How could the author of *Die Räuber* and *Don Carlos* appeal to a classical mind?

Schiller was the poet of freedom; Goethe of law and order. In fact, the French republic sent Schiller a diploma conferring honorary citizenship upon “Monsieur Gille [*sic!*], publiciste allemand,” which he disdained. But when, in 1794, Schiller invited Goethe to contribute to his new-

founded periodical, *Die Horen*, their relationship changed completely. "It was in a conflict between the Object and the Subject," Goethe said, "the greatest and most interminable of all conflicts, that began our friendship, which was eternal." They acted as a tonic to one another, each encouraging the other to do his best. They corresponded regularly, about philosophy and poetry, in letters that are mainly interesting for their analyses of each other's work. "It was a new spring to me," Goethe penned just after starting the correspondence with Schiller, "in which all seeds shot up, and gaily blossomed in my nature."

One of their joint products, the *Xenien*—epigrams avenging themselves on the critics and writers of their day—caused an uproar that literary works seldom arouse. As one critic proclaimed: "On the thirty-first of October, 1517, was commenced the Reformation of the Church in Germany; in October, 1796, commenced the Reformation of German Literature. As Luther published his *Theses* in Wittenberg, so Goethe and Schiller published their *Xenien*. No one before had the courage so to confront sacred Dullness, so to lash all Hypocrisy."

In 1797, Schiller urged Goethe to take up once more the uncompleted *Faust*. Goethe had begun his working of the legend in his early manhood, at the height of the *Sturm und Drang* influence; now he was too interested in science and philosophy to complete the fragment. But later that year he suddenly decided to finish the poem:

“ . . . *this misty and cloudy road* . . . ”

Weimar, June 22, 1797

AS IT is highly necessary that I give myself something to do, in my present unsettled state, I have determined to go at my *Faust*, in order, if not to finish it, yet at least to carry it forward a good way, and for this I will break up what is printed and arrange it in large masses in connection with what is already finished or invented, and thus more fully prepare for the execution of the plan, which strictly is as yet only an idea. Now I have just taken up again this idea and its exposition and am tolerably at one with myself in regard to it. Now I would wish that you would have the goodness to revolve the matter in your mind some sleepless night, lay before me the requisitions that you would make on the whole, and thus relate and interpret to me, like a true prophet, my own dreams.

As the different parts of this poem, in what relates to their mood, can be treated differently, provided only that they be kept subordinate to the spirit and tone of the whole; as, moreover, the entire work is subjective, I can therefore work at it in odd moments, and thus I am able to accomplish something now.

Our ballad studies have brought me again into this misty and cloudy road, and circumstances counsel me, in more than one sense, to rove about in it for a while.

What is interesting in my new epic plan will perhaps vanish into the air in such a mist of rhyme and strophe.

For today fare you well. . . . If you could but make up your mind to measure once more the Jena road. I would, however, wish you better weather for such an expedition.

G.

GOETHE, although earlier uninfluenced by Schiller's criticisms, now valued all of his friend's suggestions. "You have created a new youth for me," Goethe told him, "and once more restored me to poetry, which I had almost entirely given up." Schiller, delighted with the news, hastened to give Goethe his views on the poem:

". . . the fable runs and must run into the fantastic
and pointless . . ."

Jena, June 23, 1797

YOUR determination to go at *Faust* has indeed surprised me, particularly now, when you are girding yourself for a journey to Italy. But I have once for all given up measuring you with common logic and am thence convinced beforehand that your genius will see you well through with the undertaking.

Your request to me to communicate to you my expectations and *desideria* is not so easy to fulfil; but so far as I can, I will try to discover your thread, and if that is not possible, I will figure to myself that I had accidentally found the fragments of *Faust* and had to complete them. Thus much only will I here remark, that your *Faust* cannot with all his poetic individuality, entirely ward off the demand for a symbolic significance, as is probably your own idea. The duality of human nature, and the abortive endeavour to unite in man the godlike and the physical, one does not lose sight of; and because the fable runs and must run into the fantastic and formless, people will not stop with the subject, but will be led from it to ideas. In short, the demands on *Faust* are at the same time philosophical and poetical, and you may turn yourself as you will, the nature of the subject will impose on you a philosophical treatment, and the imagination must accommodate itself to the service of a philosophical idea.

But herewith I am not telling you anything new, for in what is already done you have begun to satisfy this demand in a high degree.

If you now really take up *Faust*, I shall have no further doubt of its complete execution, at which I am much rejoiced. . . .

On Monday, I think I shall send you a new ballad; the present is a fruitful time for the bringing forth of ideas. Farewell.

Sch.

THE first part of *Faust* was completed during Schiller's lifetime, but the "divine comedy" of the eighteenth century was not published until after his death. To the early, romantic portions of the poem, Goethe added his new philosophies of life, and, when the poem was finished, it became a noble treatment of the follies and essential greatness of mankind.

In 1800, Schiller left Jena to live at Weimar, where he was to reside until his death. There, he and Goethe made up part of a literary circle that became as famous as the city of Weimar itself. All men of letters and important personages tried to gain entry to the circle. Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, at one of those meetings, described Goethe: "Finally, he read, or rather performed, an unpublished poem, in which the flames of his heart burst through the external crust of ice; so that he greeted my enthusiasm with a pressure of the hand. . . . By heaven! we shall love each other! He considers his poetic career closed. There is nothing comparable to his reading. It is like deep-toned thunder, blended with whispering raindrops." About Schiller, Jean Paul raised no great enthusiasm: "I went yesterday to see the stony Schiller, from whom all strangers sprang back as from a precipice. His form is wasted, yet severely powerful, and very angular. He is full of acumen, but without love. His conversation is as excellent as his writings."

Although Schiller was ten years younger than Goethe, the older man was to outlive him by more than a quarter century. In the spring of 1805, Schiller left the ailing Goethe to go to the theatre. On his return, Schiller's health rapidly declined. While his friend lay dying,

Goethe himself grew more feeble. In a short time, Schiller died, and the news spread around Weimar; in tribute, they closed the theatre. Goethe alone had not heard of his friend's death. But when he noticed his servants and friends purposely avoiding him, he knew that something was amiss. He asked a friend if Schiller was still very ill. When the friend burst into tears, Goethe muttered, "He is dead."

For Goethe, the blow was indeed great. "The half of my existence is gone from me," he wrote. After Schiller's death, he could no longer bury himself in his work until many months had passed. "My diary," he explained, "is a blank at this period; the white pages intimate the blank in my existence. In those days I took no interest in anything."

WILLIAM BLAKE HAS AN APOCALYPTIC VISION OF ETERNITY

[A LETTER TO JOHN FLAXMAN]

WORDSWORTH once told a friend: "There is no doubt that this poor man was mad, but there is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott." William Blake's stock-in-trade was his "visions", but he was not mad. Compliant spirits would always show themselves to Blake at the right time, thus enabling him to paint their portraits, sometimes unfinished because "it moved" or "the mouth is gone". They also enabled him to take down first-hand accounts of Ezekiel and other Biblical characters who revealed themselves. The formula was simple. According to Blake: "You can see what I do if you choose. Work up imagination to the state of vision, and the thing is done."

In 1800, John Flaxman, the famous sculptor, introduced Blake to William Hayley, a country squire who produced a considerable quantity of bad poetry. Blake had previously engraved illustrations for one of Hayley's ponderous volumes. Hayley's next work was occasioned by the death of his friend, the poet Cowper. When his own illegitimate son died the very next week, Hayley decided to write the life and memoirs of both his son and Cowper (taking off time every day to indite a sonnet or two to his dead son, the sonnets gradually piling up into manuscript volumes). When Blake sent his sympathies, Hayley, deeply touched, sent back a copy of his *Triumphs of Temper*, with an inscription to Blake in execrable verse:

*Accept, my gentle visionary Blake,
Whose thoughts are fanciful and kindly mild;*

*Accept, and fondly keep for friendship's sake,
This favoured vision, my poetic child!*

*Rich in more grace than fancy ever won,
To thy most tender mind this book will be,
For it belonged to my departed son;
So from an angel it descends to thee.*

Soon Hayley conceived the idea of Blake's designing and engraving the illustrations for his *Life of Cowper*. In order to work more harmoniously, he invited Blake to settle down near his estate at Felpham. Blake rented a house near-by and, with his wife and younger sister, went to live there. To Flaxman, Blake wrote:

*“ . . . I wrote and painted . . . before my mortal
life . . . ”*

Felpham, September 21, 1800

DEAR SCULPTOR OF ETERNITY:
We are safe arrived at our cottage, which is more beautiful than I thought it, and more convenient. It is a perfect model for cottages, and I think for palaces of magnificence, only enlarging not altering its proportions and adding ornaments and not principles. Nothing can be more grand than its simplicity and usefulness. Simple without intricacy, it seems to be the spontaneous expression of humanity, congenial to the wants of man. No other formed house can ever please me so well, nor shall I ever be persuaded, I believe, that it can be improved either in beauty or use.

Mr. Hayley received us with his usual brotherly affection. I have begun to work. Felpham is a sweet place for study, because

it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates: her windows are not obstructed by vapours; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard and their forms more distinctly seen; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses. My wife and sister are both well, courting Neptune for an embrace.

Our journey was very pleasant, and, though we had a great deal of luggage, no grumbling. All was cheerfulness and good humour on the road, and yet we could not arrive at our cottage before half-past eleven at night, owing to the necessary shifting of our luggage from one chaise to another, for we had seven different chaises and as many different drivers. We set out between six and seven in the morning of Thursday, with sixteen heavy boxes and portfolios full of prints.

And now begins a new life, because another covering of earth is shaken off. I am more famed in heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and those works are the delight and study of archangels. Why then should I be anxious about the riches and fame of mortality? The Lord our Father will do for us and with us according to His divine will.

You, O dear Flaxman, are a sublime archangel—my friend and companion from eternity. In the divine bosom is our dwelling-place. I look back into the regions of reminiscence, and behold our ancient days before this earth appeared in its vegetative mortality to my mortal vegetated eyes. I see our houses of eternity which can never be separated, though our mortal vehicles should stand at the remotest corners of heaven from each other.

Farewell, my best Friend;—remember me and my wife in love and friendship to our dear Mrs. Flaxman, whom we ardently desire to entertain beneath our thatched roof of rusted gold. And believe me for ever to remain your grateful and affectionate

William Blake

FOR three years Blake lived at his "perfect model" of a cottage. In his own words, "Mr. Hayley acts like a prince." But all did not go well. The dampness of the country affected both Blake's and his wife's health. The main cause of his dissatisfaction, however, was the ever-meddling Squire Hayley. Blake liked to do what he wanted, and without interference: for instance, during the French Revolution, he was the only one of his circle, including Priestley, Godwin, and Paine, who not only supported the Revolution, but who walked the streets dressed in the revolutionary "red cap". Hayley always interfered. "My unhappiness," he wrote, "has arisen from a source which, if explored too narrowly, might hurt my pecuniary circumstances." Hayley meant well, introducing Blake to his wealthy friends who could advance the artist's position, but Blake would have very little of them. Then, too, his visions began to desert him. He later used to say: "The Visions were angry with me at Felpham."

Blake finally made up his mind to return to London "that I may converse with my friends in Eternity, see visions, dream dreams, and prophesy and speak parables, unobserved, and at liberty from the doubts of other mortals." So, in 1803, "determined to be no longer pestered with Hayley's genteel ignorance and polite disapprobation," he left Felpham. They remained friends, nevertheless, though Blake later indited:

*Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache:—
Do be my enemy, for friendship's sake.*

CHARLES LAMB SEES SNAKES BY CANDLELIGHT

[A LETTER TO THOMAS MANNING]

CHARLES LAMB is one of the strong candidates for the impossible title of Best of the English Letter Writers. "Scattered up and down these letters," wrote Augustine Birrell, "are to be found golden sentences, criticisms both of life and of books, to rival which one would have far to go." As a fanciful, always inquisitive observer of everything under the sun he is without peer and is all the better for being, on many occasions, cock-eyed in a fine lyrical way. "He is sublime, heartrending, excruciatingly funny, outrageously ridiculous, possibly an inch or two overdrawn": a further quotation from Birrell, who knew how to catch at quality and qualities.

Take this Lamb letter, for instance, dating from his twenty-fifth year. What a great set piece it is—in parvo! Not another man in the dawning century (and certainly, no one in the centuries before) could have managed that mock-horrific note:

"He opened his damn'd mouth . . ."

[October 16, 1800]

DEAR MANNING:

Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the

Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *Feverites*; and, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise with the sincerity of *Saint Peter*, and the contrition of *Sinner Peter* if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Camb. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not Libraries, Halls, Colleges, Books, Pictures, Statues?

I wish to God you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius*,—A LIVE RATTLESNAKE, 10 feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candle-light. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*,—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds; and immediately a stranger enters (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open: the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his damn'd big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it.

He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box, and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back, had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his damn'd mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright. . . .

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake, C. L.

LAMB'S correspondent, Thomas Manning, was one of the maddest Englishmen of the nineteenth century. He met Lamb in 1799. They became close friends, and Lamb later introduced him into the Essays of Elia as "my friend M., who with great painstaking got me to think I understood the first proposition of Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second." Manning's passion was the Chinese language, and in 1806, much to Lamb's distress, he went to live in China, where he practised medicine. In 1811, he decided to enter Tibet through India, with Lhasa as his goal. Ordinarily, he probably would not have won through, but at the border he happened to cure a sick Chinese general, who out of gratitude helped Manning to reach the holy city, which he entered in December, 1811. He remained four months. Then, after many improbable adventures, all true, he returned to England, where he lived as a hermit the rest of his life. In 1838, two years before his death, he pulled his luxuriant beard out by the roots.

Manning has two claims to immortality: he was the first Englishman to visit Lhasa, and Lamb pretended that he had given "Elia" that translation of a Chinese manuscript upon which "A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig" was based.

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE COMMANDS RUTHLESS WAR- FARE AGAINST THE FRENCH SOLDIERS IN HAITI

[A LETTER TO GENERAL DESSALINES]

WHEN William Blake wrote his famous line, "And I am black, but O, my soul is white," perhaps he had a prevision. For, a few years later, Pierre Dominique Toussaint began his career to free his people from the tyrannies of the whites. In 1791, Toussaint, the son of a slave, joined the native insurrection in Haiti, first serving as physician and then as statesman and soldier. During the bloody struggle, Toussaint was the one force for moderation; his own chiefs accused him of partiality to the whites.

Meanwhile, in France, the Terror ran its riotous course, and the sons of freedom did not wish to lose what might prove a valuable colonial possession. Therefore, in 1793, France, through special commissioners sent to the island, abolished slavery in Haiti. The warring elements in Haiti—or Saint-Dominique, as the French colony was called—continued the struggle. Further to complicate the situation, the British invaded the island. The genius capable of quelling these disorders arose—Toussaint, surnamed l'Ouverture for breaking through the enemy lines. In 1796 he became commander-in-chief of the armies of Saint-Dominique, drove out the British two years later, restored order, and in 1801 made himself master of the entire country.

To the First Consul of the French Republic, Toussaint became the saviour of the French colony. But when Toussaint published a form of constitutional government, subject to the approval of France, in which he was to be life governor, Napoleon, reversing himself, decided not to trust this upstart. He dispatched 25,000 men, under General Leclerc, to reduce the colony and to restore slavery. When Toussaint realised the designs of the French, he gathered his troops together, renounced French

authority, and prepared his people for resistance. After the French had landed, Toussaint bade his chief subordinate, General Jean Jacques Dessalines, to subdue the enemy.

“ . . . burn and annihilate everything . . . ”

Headquarters, Gonaïves, Feb. 8, 1802

THERE is no reason for despair, Citizen General, if you can succeed in removing from the troops that have landed the sources offered to them by Port Republican. Endeavour, by all the means of force and address, to set that place on fire; it is constructed entirely of wood; you have only to send into it some faithful emissaries. Are there none under your orders devoted enough for this service? Ah! my dear General, what a misfortune that there was a traitor in that city, and that your orders and mine were not put into execution.

Watch the moment when the garrison shall be weak in consequence of expeditions into the plains, and then try to surprise and carry that city, falling on it in the rear.

Do not forget, while waiting for the rainy season which will rid us of our foes, that we have no other resource than destruction and flames. Bear in mind that the soil bathed with our sweat must not furnish our enemies with the smallest aliment. Tear up the roads with shot; throw corpses and horses into all the fountains; burn and annihilate everything in order that those who have come to reduce us to slavery may have before their eyes the image of that hell which they deserve.

Salutation and Friendship,

Toussaint l'Ouverture

GENERAL LECLERC, weary of the ferocious struggle, sent his proposals of peace to Toussaint. As treacherous as his brother-in-law Napoleon, Leclerc asked him to lay down his arms, giving the most solemn pledges of amity between the two factions. Toussaint took the word of the French, only to be seized by them and sent to France. Napoleon had him imprisoned in France, near Besançon. There, addressing eloquent pleas to Napoleon for his release, starved and ill-treated, Toussaint died in 1803.

The negroes in Haiti, infuriated by the treachery of the French, once more made war upon them, under General Dessalines, killing and mutilating more barbarously than ever before. The island's history remained a bloody page well into the twentieth century.

To Toussaint, Wordsworth, then the friend of freedom, indited one of his greatest sonnets:

*Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience! Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee: air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.*

LORD NELSON SENDS EMMA HAMILTON A LAST PLEDGE OF LOVE BEFORE THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

THE rise of Emma Lyon, alias Emma Hart, from street girl to the wife of Sir William Hamilton, British ambassador at Naples, and finally the mistress of Admiral Nelson is a twice-told tale which has recently been immortalised further on the screen. Its details are those which can be found in the early life of any ambitious prostitute, but it is not irrelevant to record that Sir William bought her from his nephew in return for paying his debts. In 1791, when she was twenty-six years old, Emma became Sir William's wife. It is not utterly clear that she loved Nelson, whom she met as early as 1793, any more than she loved her husband. In any event, both men were the slaves of her ambition.

In 1798, Nelson was thrown much into Lady Hamilton's society while he was convalescing from a wound received at the Battle of the Nile. Their friendship deepened into flagrant dereliction as soon as she was able to bring it about. Maria Carolina, the loose-moralled Queen of Naples, and Emma's dotting, practically senile husband, who had much cold-blooded amorality in his nature, winked at a design for living in which they were both involved. When he returned to England in 1800 with the Hamiltons, Nelson found a scandalised great world arrayed against him. Popular acclaim offset the disdain of society, particularly after his victory at Copenhagen. His social equals condemned him less on the grounds of morals than on those of taste—he forced Lady Hamilton on everyone and quarrelled with those who would not accept her. After brutally repudiating his wife, he lived with the Hamiltons until Sir William's death in 1803. No doubt he would have married Emma had Lady Nelson permitted him a divorce.

In May, 1803, Nelson was appointed commander of the Mediterranean station. The next two and a half years were ones of terrific energy, during which he was at the height of his powers. On October 19, while the opposed fleets were manoeuvring for position near Trafalgar, he wrote a note to Emma which he continued the following day:

*“May the God of Battles crown my endeavours
with success . . .”*

Victory, October 19th, 1805, Noon
Cadiz, E.S.E., 16 Leagues

MY DEAREST BELOVED EMMA, the dear friend of my bosom. The signal has been made that the Enemy's Combined Fleet are coming out of Port. We have very little wind, so that I have no hopes of seeing them before tomorrow. May the God of Battles crown my endeavours with success; at all events, I will take care that my name shall ever be most dear to you and Horatia, both of whom I love as much as my own life. And as my last writing before the Battle will be to you, so I hope in God that I shall live to finish my letter after the Battle. May Heaven bless you prays your

Nelson and Brontë

October 20th

In the morning, we were close to the Mouth of the Straits, but the wind had not come far enough to the Westward to allow the Combined Fleets to weather the Shoals off Trafalgar; but they were counted as far as forty Sail of Ships of War, which I suppose to be thirty-four of the Line, and six Frigates. A group of them was seen off the Lighthouse of Cadiz this morning, but it blows so very fresh and thick weather, that I rather believe they will go into the Harbour before night. May God Almighty give us success over these fellows, and enable us to get a Peace.

NELSON did not survive the greatest of his victories. On October 21 he died in the arms of Captain Thomas Masterman Hardy, his body riddled by musket shot. His last words were "Thank God, I have done my duty," but just previously he had said earnestly to Hardy, "Remember, I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country."

England showed no sign of acknowledging the legacy—it had paid much more attention to the worthless Charles II's "Don't let poor Nelly starve!" But an ordinary widow would have considered herself well-to-do with the income of £2000 Hamilton and Nelson had left Emma. Of course, Emma was no ordinary widow—she was an incurable gambler and spendthrift, and within ten years had gambled and squandered herself into not quite a pauper's grave in a foreign country. There is a strong resemblance between her career and that of George Bryan Brummell, the foppish favourite of the Prince Regent.

Of the many contemporary accounts of Emma Hamilton, that of William Beckford, the fantastic author of *Vathek*, seems the fairest. His own indifference to moral integrity made him tolerant of her lapses, while his cultivation and knowledge of the best society made him a dependable critic. Replying to a question of Emma's being fascinating, he replied: "I never thought her so. She was somewhat masculine, but symmetrical in figure, so that Sir William called her his Grecian. She was full in person, not fat, but embonpoint. Her carriage often majestic, rather than feminine. Not at all delicate, ill-bred, often very affected, a devil in temper when set on edge. She had beautiful hair and displayed it. Her countenance was agreeable,—fine, hardly beautiful, but the outline excellent. She affected sensibility, but felt none—was artful; and no wonder, she had been trained in the court of Naples—a fine school for an English woman of any stamp. Nelson was infatuated. She could make him believe anything, that the profligate Queen was a Madonna. He was her dupe."

But the chief thing about Emma and Nelson was that she flattered him the way he wished to be flattered. In a day when to be compared to a Frenchman was the grossest indignity that could be offered one Englishman by another, Nelson was frequently called French because of the prodigiousness of his vanity. Vanity was considered an exclusively French trait.

TWO LETTERS OF LORD BYRON

[ADDRESSED TO HENRY DRURY AND JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE]

LITTLE of Manfred, but not very much of him," W. S. Gilbert declared in *Patience*, and such is now the popular opinion of Byron as a poet. Though there are doubts about the lasting, living quality of Byron's poetry, his letters have no such qualifications. A swaggerer, a poseur, an egoist—all these account for some of the action, verve, and brio in his letters. His spirit—a very full-blooded, wine-drinking, personable spirit it is—goes bounding across the pages of his correspondence.

Lord Macaulay, who exclaimed that Byron's followers drew a system of ethics from his poetry, "compounded of misanthropy and voluptuousness, a system in which the two great commandments were, to hate your neighbour, and to love your neighbour's wife," pronounced Byron's fate in 1830: "To us he is still a man, young, noble, and unhappy. To our children he will be merely a writer; and their impartial judgment will appoint his place among writers, without regard to his rank or to his private history. That his poetry will undergo a severe sifting, that much of what has been admired by his contemporaries will be rejected as worthless, we have little doubt. But we have as little doubt that, after the closest scrutiny, there will still remain much that can only perish with the English language." His letters also belong to that much that will not perish.

The man who influenced the literature of the nineteenth century more than any other, if not by his poetry, by his heroic feats, his athletic skill, his interest in revolution and freedom, and his many loves, deserves a better fate than he has received. Indeed, many modern readers agree with The

Edinburgh Review that Byron should have given up poetry and better employed his leisure hours. Perhaps, after a thorough reading of his letters, more people will come to realise that Byron has a raciness and originality that, though often descending into vulgarity and coarseness, distinguish not only his correspondence but a great part of his poetry.

LORD BYRON SWIMS THE HELLESPONT AND RAMBLES
ON ABOUT HIS TRAVELS

[A LETTER TO HENRY DRURY]

TWENTY-ONE years old, having just taken his seat in the House of Lords, Byron decided to set out upon his travels. To his violent-tempered mother, who threw china when in a pet and, at Byron himself, fire-irons, he had written that “we do not give mankind a fair chance” if we stay at home. “It is from experience, not books” that we ought to judge other nations. “There is nothing like inspection, and trusting our own senses.” With his school friend, John Cam Hobhouse, and his servants, he departed for Lisbon.

After a number of amorous incidents across the Continent, he reached Turkey. To Henry Drury, who had become his friend at Cambridge, he told the story of his adventures:

“I can swear in Turkish . . .”

Salsette frigate, May 3, 1810

MY DEAR DRURY:
When I left England, nearly a year ago, you requested me to write to you—I will do so. I have crossed Portugal, traversed the south of Spain, visited Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, and thence passed into Turkey, where I am still wandering. I first landed in Albania, the ancient Epirus, where we penetrated as far as Mount

Tomarit—excellently treated by the chief Ali Pacha,—and, after journeying through Illyria, Chaonia, etc., crossed the Gulf of Actium, with a guard of fifty Albanians, and passed the Achelous in our route through Acarnania and Ætolia. We stopped a short time in the Morea, crossed the Gulf of Lepanto, and landed at the foot of Parnassus;—saw all that Delphi retains, and so on to Thebes and Athens, at which last we remained ten weeks.

His Majesty's ship, *Pylades*, brought us to Smyrna; but not before we had topographised Attica, including, of course, Marathon and the Sunian promontory. From Smyrna to the Troad (which we visited when at anchor, for a fortnight, off the tomb of Antilochus) was our next stage; and now we are in the Dardanelles, waiting for a wind to proceed to Constantinople.

This morning I *swam* from *Sestos* to *Abydos*. The immediate distance is not above a mile, but the current renders it hazardous;—so much so that I doubt whether Leander's conjugal affection must not have been a little chilled in his passage to Paradise. I attempted it a week ago, and failed,—owing to the north wind, and the wonderful rapidity of the tide,—though I have been from my childhood a strong swimmer. But, this morning being calmer, I succeeded, and crossed the "broad Hellespont" in an hour and ten minutes.

Well, my dear sir, I have left my home, and seen part of Africa and Asia, and a tolerable portion of Europe. I have been with generals and admirals, princes and pashas, governors and ungovernables,—but I have not time or paper to expatiate. I wish to let you know that I live with a friendly remembrance of you, and a hope to meet you again; and if I do this as shortly as possible, attribute it to any thing but forgetfulness.

Greece, ancient and modern, you know too well to require description. Albania, indeed, I have seen more of than any Englishman (except a Mr. Leake), for it is a country rarely visited, from the savage character of the natives, though abounding in more natural beauties than the classical regions of Greece,—which, however, are still eminently beautiful, particularly Delphi and Cape Colonna in Attica. Yet these are nothing to

parts of Illyria and Epirus, where places without a name, and rivers not laid down in maps, may, one day, when more known, be justly esteemed superior subject, for the pencil and the pen, to the dry ditch of the Ilissus and the bogs of Boeotia.

The Troad is a fine field for conjecture and snipe-shooting, and a good sportsman and an ingenious scholar may exercise their feet and faculties to great advantage upon the spot;—or, if they prefer riding, lose their way (as I did) in a cursed quagmire of the Scamander, who wriggles about as if the Dardan virgins still offered their wonted tribute. The only vestige of Troy, or her destroyers, are the barrows supposed to contain the carcasses of Achilles, Antilochus, Ajax, etc.;—but Mount Ida is still in high feather, though the shepherds are now-a-days not much like Ganymede. But why should I say more of these things? are they not written in the *Boke of Gell*? and has not Hobhouse got a journal? I keep none, as I have renounced scribbling.

I see not much difference between ourselves and the Turks, save that we have** and they have none—that they have long dresses, and we short, and that we talk much, and they little. They are sensible people. Ali Pacha told me he was sure I was a man of rank, because I had *small ears* and *hands*, and *curling hair*. By the by, I speak the Romaic, or modern Greek, tolerably. It does not differ from the ancient dialects so much as you would conceive; but the pronunciation is diametrically opposite. Of verse, except in rhyme, they have no idea.

I like the Greeks, who are plausible rascals,—with all the Turkish vices, without their courage. However, some are brave, and all are beautiful, very much resembling the busts of Alcibiades;—the women not quite so handsome. I can swear in Turkish; but, except one horrible oath, and “pimp”, and “bread”, and “water”, I have got no great vocabulary in that language. They are extremely polite to strangers of any rank, properly protected; and as I have two servants and two soldiers, we got on with great *éclat*. We have been occasionally in danger of thieves, and once of shipwreck,—but always escaped.

Of Spain I sent some account to our Hodgson, but have sub-

sequently written to no one, save notes to relations and lawyers, to keep them out of my premises. I mean to give up all connection, on my return, with many of my best friends—as I supposed them—and to snarl all my life. But I hope to have one good-humoured laugh with you, and to embrace Dwyer, and pledge Hodgson, before I commence cynicism.

Tell Dr. Butler I am now writing with the gold pen he gave me before I left England, which is the reason my scrawl is more unintelligible than usual. I have been at Athens, and seen plenty of these reeds for scribbling, some of which he refused to bestow upon me, because topographic Gell had brought them from Attica. But I will not describe,—no you must be satisfied with simple detail till my return, and then we will unfold the floodgates of colloquy. I am in a thirty-six-gun frigate, going up to fetch Bob Adair from Constantinople, who will have the honour to carry this letter.

And so Hobhouse's *boke* is out, with some sentimental sing-song of my own to fill up,—and how does it take, eh? and where the devil is the second edition of my Satire, with additions? and my name on the title page? and more lines tagged to the end, with a new exordium and what not, hot from my anvil before I cleared the Channel? The Mediterranean and the Atlantic roll between me and criticism; and the thunders of the Hyperborean Review are deafened by the roar of the Hellespont.

Remember me to Claridge, if not translated to college, and present to Hodgson assurances of my high consideration. Now, you will ask, what shall I do next? and I answer, I do not know. I may return in a few months, but I have intents and projects after visiting Constantinople.—Hobhouse, however, will probably be back in September.

On the 2d of July we have left Albion one year—*oblitus meorum obliviscendus et illis*. I was sick of my own country, and not much prepossessed in favour of any other; but I “drag on my chain” without “lengthening it at each remove.” I am like the Jolly Miller; caring for nobody, and not cared for. All countries are much the same in my eyes. I smoke, and stare at mountains, and

twirl my mustachios very independently. I miss no comforts, and the mosquitoes that rack the morbid frame of H. have, luckily for me, little effect on mine, because I live more temperately.

I omitted Ephesus in my catalogue, which I visited during my sojourn at Smyrna; but the Temple has almost perished, and St. Paul need not trouble himself to epistolise the present brood of Ephesians, who have converted a large church built entirely of marble into a mosque, and I don't know that the edifice looks the worse for it.

My paper is full, and my ink ebbing—good afternoon! If you address me at Malta, the letter will be forwarded wherever I may be. H. greets you; he pines for his poetry,—at least, some tidings of it. I almost forgot to tell you that I am dying for love of three Greek girls at Athens, sisters. I lived in the same house. Teresa, Mariana, and Katinka, are the names of these divinities,—all of them under fifteen.

Your ταπεινοτατος δουλος,

Byron

TERESA, eldest of the "divinities", was later celebrated by Byron as the Maid of Athens. And later, as all know, Byron was to die fighting for the Greece he came to admire during this trip.

When he reached England, Byron found that his mother had died the day before. In a fit of melancholia, he burst into tears and said that he had lost his last friend. He made a will once more requesting that he be buried beside his favourite dog, on which in an epitaph he had lavished greater praise than on mankind. From his travels he brought back with him the first cantos of Childe Harold.

LORD BYRON INFORMS A FRIEND OF HIS OWN DEATH

[A LETTER TO JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE]

AFTER Byron's unfortunate marriage with, and separation from, Miss Milbanke, who wrote that he had wed her "with the deepest determination of revenge, avowed on the day of my marriage and executed ever since with systematic and increasing cruelty," he once more quitted England, never to return except in death. Not only did Lady Byron make things unpleasant for him, but the English were annoyed at his posturings and excesses, and "sad, mad, bad" Caroline Lamb published a novel about her affair with him—she who had burned Byron in effigy, with white-clad maidens dancing around the flames, while she, dressed as a page, repeated doggerel and cast everything he had given her into the pyre.

Byron travelled to Italy and finally settled in the "greenest island of my imagination"—Venice. There he indulged all his vices, alternately condemning himself for so doing. "I detest every recollection of the place, the people, and my pursuits," he later wrote. After a sumptuous feast he would go on a diet. All his life he had a tendency toward fat and, when he wished to lose weight, he would adopt strange diets. He took hot baths, exercised, and ate just a little rice. At other times he would fast for forty-eight hours at a time, then live on tea and six biscuits a day, or drink vinegar and water. He said he wrote *Don Juan* on gin and water. Unfortunately, dieting could not remove other traces of his varied indulgences.

To John Cam Hobhouse, the friend who had accompanied him on his tour, he wrote, in the guise of his servant, William Fletcher, who had been with him since the trip to Turkey, of his death and the vices that brought it about:

*“ . . . caused by anxiety, sea-bathing, women, and
riding in the Sun . . . ”*

Venice, June, 1818

SIR:
With great grief I inform you of the death of my late dear Master, my Lord, who died this morning at ten of the Clock of a rapid decline and slow fever, caused by anxiety, sea-bathing, women, and riding in the Sun against my advice.

He is a dreadful loss to every body, mostly to me, who have lost a master and a place—also, I hope you, Sir, will give me a charakter.

I saved in his service as you know several hundred pounds. God knows how, for I don't, nor my late master neither; and if my wage was not always paid to the day, still it was or is to be paid sometime and somehow. You, Sir, who are his executioner won't see a poor Servant wronged of his little all.

My dear Master had several phisicians and a Priest: he died a Papish, but is to be buried among the Jews in the Jewish burying ground; for my part I don't see why—he could not abide them when living nor any other people, hating whores who asked him for money.

He suffered his illness with great patience, except that when in extremity he twice damned his friends and said they were selfish rascals—you, Sir, particularly and Mr. Kinnaird, who had never answered his letters nor complied with his repeated requests. He also said he hoped that your new tragedy would be damned—God forgive him—I hope that my master won't be damned like the tragedy.

His nine whores are already provided for, and the other

servants; but what is to become of me? I have got his Cloathes and Carriages, and Cash, and everything; but the Consul quite against law has clapt his seal and taken an inventory and swears that *he* must account to my Lord's heirs—who they are, I don't know—but they ought to consider poor Servants and above all his Vally de Sham.

My Lord never grudged me perquisites—my wage was the least I got by him; and if I did keep the Countess (she is, or ought to be, a Countess, although she is upon the town) Marietta Monetta Piretta, after passing my word to you and my Lord that I would not never no more—still he was an indulgent master, and only said I was a damned fool, and swore and forgot it again. What could I do? she said as how she should die, or kill herself if I did not go with her, and so I did—and kept her out of my Lord's washing and ironing—and nobody can deny that, although the charge was high, the linen was well got up.

Hope you are well, Sir—am, with tears in my eyes,

Yours faithfoolly to command,

Wm. Fletcher

P.S.—If you know any Gentleman in want of a Wally—hope for a charakter. I saw your late Swiss Servant in the Galleys at Leghorn for robbing an Inn—he produced your recommendation at his trial.

WILLIAM FLETCHER *stayed with Byron until his death in the Greek war. He was the last Englishman to see the poet alive and to hear his last, but inaudible, words for his wife, daughter, and sister. Later, Byron mumbled, "Now I shall go to sleep," lapsed into unconsciousness, and died the next day.*

MADAME DE STAËL BEGS NAPOLEON TO REVOKE HER EXILE

NAPOLEON and Madame de Staël were too much alike not to conflict. They both wanted to be supreme in France: he as the political, she as the literary, ruler. "Madame de Staël's existence," wrote Sainte-Beuve, "is altogether like a great empire, which she is ceaselessly occupied, no less than that other conqueror, her contemporary and oppressor, in completing and augmenting."

In 1802 Madame de Staël published *Delphine*. Immediately all Paris was aroused at the ideas she stated so blithely concerning religion, marriage, and politics. One critic wrote, "Nothing could be more dangerous or more immoral than the principles set forth in this book." "Delphine speaks of love in the manner of a Bacchante, of God in that of a Quaker, of death in that of a grenadier, and of morality as a sophist," said another. Madame de Staël, fearing some official reprisal, begged her friends to protect her and intercede in her behalf. When Napoleon got wind of her anxiety, he decided that it would indeed be a good thing to punish her. Accordingly, he compelled her to leave Paris; she had to reside at least forty miles away.

Thinking to rebuke Napoleon, Madame de Staël left France altogether and went to Germany. Though well received there, she made excursions to France and, through the influence of Fouché, was allowed to live eighteen miles from Paris. The temptation was too great. She made secret journeys to Paris, walking the streets by moonlight, and could not resist seeing her old friend, Madame de Tessé, who had exclaimed, "If I were a queen I would command Madame de Staël to talk to me all day long." When, in 1807, she published *Corinne*, Napoleon was so distinctly annoyed at the book that he wrote a critique of his own about it for a Paris journal. Complete exile was his revenge. "I have written to the Minister of Police," he notified a friend, "to send Mme de Stael back to Geneva, with permission to go to any foreign country she chooses.

That woman still pursues her profession of intrigante. . She went to Paris against my orders—she is a perfect pest."

Back in Coppet, her Swiss retreat, *Madame de Stael*, surrounded by her friends, among them *August Wilhelm von Schlegel* and *Benjamin Constant*, began work on *De l'Allemagne*. A writer, visiting her at Coppet, described her as having "a loud voice and a rather masculine face, but a tender and delicate heart." When her book was completed, suffering, as *Sainte-Beuve* says, from *mal de la capitale*, she sought to gain entry into France. "I am the exiled *Orestes*," she lamented to a friend. In Vienna, she wrote to *Constant*: "You wrote to me thirteen years ago from America, 'If I remain here a year longer, I shall die'; I can say the same of my absence abroad, I am overcome with grief here." If *Napoleon* would not permit her to return to Paris, she would go to England. She begged him to let her return:

"Such a life is unbearable . . ."

[1810]

SIRE,
I take the liberty of presenting to Your Majesty my work on Germany. If you deign to read it, it seems to me that you will find in it indications of a mind capable of some reflection, which time has ripened.

Sire, ten years have passed since I saw Your Majesty and eight since I have been exiled. Eight years of misery modify all characters, and destiny teaches resignation to those who suffer.

Ready to embark, I supplicate Your Majesty to grant me the favour of an interview before my departure. I shall permit myself one thing only in this letter, namely, to explain the motives which induce me to leave Europe, if I cannot obtain from Your

Majesty permission to remain in the neighbourhood of Paris, in order that my children may live there.

To be in disgrace with Your Majesty casts upon those who suffer it such disfavour in Europe that I cannot make a step without feeling its effects; for while some fear to compromise themselves by holding intercourse with me, and others think themselves Romans in triumphing over this fear, the simplest courtesies of society become insupportable by a proud spirit. There are some among my friends who have associated their fate with mine with admirable generosity; but I have seen the most friendly sentiments destroyed by the necessity of living with me in solitude, and I have passed eight years of my life between the fear of not obtaining sacrifices and the misery of being their object.

It is perhaps ridiculous to enter into such details with the sovereign of the world. But, Sire, the world was given you by your sovereign genius; and in looking at the human heart, Your Majesty understands its most delicate as well as its noblest feelings. My sons have no career; my daughter is thirteen and should be established in a few years. It would be selfish to force her to live in the insipid retreats to which I am condemned. From her also I must separate! Such a life is unbearable, yet I see no remedy.

What city of Europe can I choose where Your Majesty's disfavour will not be an invincible obstacle to the establishment of my children, as well as my own repose?

Your Majesty may not personally know the fear which exiles cause to the greater part of the authorities in all countries; and I might relate to you results of this which certainly surpass the punishment which you have ordained.

Your Majesty has been told that I regret Paris because of the Musée and of Talma. This is an agreeable pleasantry upon exile—that is upon the misfortune which Cicero and Bolingbroke have declared the most insupportable of all.

But while I delight in the masterworks of the arts which France owes to Your Majesty's conquests—while I delight in beautiful tragedies, the representations of heroism—is it for you, Sire, to blame me? The happiness of each individual results from the

nature of his faculties; and if heaven has given me talents, are not the enjoyments of the arts and of intellect necessary to my imagination?

While so many people ask Your Majesty for substantial advantages of every kind, why should I blush to ask you for friendship, poetry, music, pictures, all that ideal existence which I can enjoy without swerving from the submission which I owe to the monarch of France?

NAPOLEON, of course, refused her permission. On the eve of the publication of her book *De l'Allemagne* in Paris, the police destroyed all ten thousand copies, though it had been passed by the censors. The book was "not French", Napoleon asserted. Madame de Staël's friends persuaded her to write something about the birthday of Napoleon's son, the King of Rome, and thereby get into Napoleon's good graces. This brought a prompt reply that she found nothing better to wish for the child than that he should have a good wet nurse.

Travelling through Austria, Russia, then across Sweden and Norway, since she could not go through France, Madame de Staël made her way to England. When Napoleon met defeat and Louis XVIII assumed the throne, she returned at last from exile. This "whirlwind in petticoats", as Heine called her, had but three more years to live. In her last illness she was wheeled out into her garden. She distributed roses and words of comfort to her friends. To Chateaubriand she said, "I have always been the same, ardent and sad; I have loved God, my father, and liberty."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE POURS OUT THE AGONIES OF A DRUG ADDICT

[A LETTER TO JOSEPH COTTLE]

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE'S use of opium began so early that in 1791, when he was only nineteen years old, he wrote nonchalantly to his brother George that "opium never used to have any disagreeable effects on me." The drug did not master him until 1803, well after the period of his most fruitful poetic activity. The favourite notion of romantic critics that Coleridge's best poetry was composed during opium debauches was refuted decisively in Professor John Livingston Lowes' brilliant study, *The Road to Xanadu*, which admits, however, that Kubla Khan may have been the whelming down of an opium dream.

Unlike De Quincey, who took his own addiction to opium with something very close to matter-of-factness, Coleridge suffered agonies of remorse. Had his health been better and his nerves less exacerbated, he might never have been more than an occasional dilettante of the drug. As soon, however, as "medicinal doses" became, to his hair-splitting mind, legitimate, the step to abuse was easy. While all the reasons for his addiction are not known thoroughly, and some of them only obscurely, it is notable that Coleridge never substantially qualified his assertion that "my sole sensuality was not to be in pain." It is hard to reconcile this statement with the fact that by 1814 he was consuming two quarts of laudanum—tincture of opium—a week. It is not surprising that he became more and more unreliable.

Several months before the following letter, Coleridge failed to appear at Bristol for a series of lectures arranged by Joseph Cottle, his friend and former publisher. When Cottle, who was unaware of the cause of Coleridge's abnormal conduct, began comparing notes with other members of the Coleridge circle, the truth came out. Cottle sent Coleridge

a long and pious remonstrance, which drew from him this abject confession of guilt:

“ . . . my case is a species of madness . . . ”

April 26, 1814

YOU have poured oil in the raw and festering wound of an old friend's conscience, Cottle! but it is *oil of vitriol*! I but barely glanced at the middle of the first page of your letter, and have seen no more of it—not from resentment (God forbid!), but from the state of my bodily and mental sufferings, that scarcely permitted human fortitude to let in a new visitor of affliction.

The object of my present reply is to state the case just as it is. First, that for ten years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger staring, but consciousness of my GUILT worse, far worse than all. I have prayed, with drops of agony on my brow, trembling not only before the justice of my Maker, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. “I gave thee so many talents, what hast thou done with them?” Secondly, overwhelmed as I am with a sense of my direful infirmity, I have never attempted to disguise or conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole case with tears and the very bitterness of shame, but in two instances I have warned young men, mere acquaintances, who had spoken of having taken laudanum, of the direful consequences, by an awful exposition of the tremendous effects on myself.

Thirdly, though before God I cannot lift up my eyelids, and only do not despair of His mercy, because to despair would be adding crime to crime, yet to my fellow-men I may say that I was seduced into the ACCURSED habit ignorantly. I had been almost bedridden for many months with swellings in my knees. In a

medical journal, I unhappily met with an account of a cure performed in a similar case (or what appeared to me so), by rubbing in of laudanum, at the same time taking a given dose internally. It acted like a charm, like a miracle! I recovered the use of my limbs, of my appetite, of my spirits, and this continued for near a fortnight. At length the unusual stimulus subsided, the complaint returned, the supposed remedy was recurred to—but I cannot go through the dreary history.

Suffice it to say, that effects were produced which acted on me by terror and cowardice, of pain and sudden death, not (so help me God!) by any temptation of pleasure, or expectation, or desire of exciting pleasurable sensations. On the very contrary, Mrs. Morgan and her sister will bear witness, so far as to say, that the longer I abstained the higher my spirits were, the keener my enjoyment—till the moment, the direful moment, arrived when my pulse began to fluctuate, my heart to palpitate, and such a dreadful falling abroad, as it were, of my whole frame, such intolerable restlessness, and incipient bewilderment, that in the last of my several attempts to abandon the dire poison, I exclaimed in agony, which I now repeat in seriousness and solemnity, "I am too poor to hazard this." Had I but a few hundred pounds, but £200—half to send to Mrs. Coleridge, and half to place myself in a private mad-house, where I could procure nothing but what a physician thought proper, and where a medical attendant could be constantly with me for two or three months (in less than that time life or death would be determined), then there might be hope. Now there is none!! O God! how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox, in his establishment; for my case is a species of madness, only that it is a derangement, an utter impotence of the volition, and not of the intellectual faculties. You bid me rouse myself: go bid a man paralytic in both arms, to rub them briskly together, and that will cure him. "Alas!" he would reply, "that I cannot move my arms is my complaint and my misery."

May God bless you, and your affectionate, but most afflicted,
S. T. Coleridge

AN ANIMATED but far from cheerful correspondence with Cottle followed. When Cottle suggested that he was possessed by the Devil, Coleridge, who even in the days of his most slavish drugging did not utterly lose a certain wry common sense, commented: "God bless him! He is a well-meaning creature but a great fool." But Cottle did his bit in showing Coleridge that he was ruining himself beyond reparation. For two years the poet tried halfheartedly to break away from opium. Finally, in 1816, he found a physician who knew how to taper off the doses until they became, by comparison, almost innocuous. For almost twenty years, his poetic gift all but gone, but his taste for rambling philosophical speculation unimpaired, Coleridge lived on to be known as the Sage of Highgate.

It was in many ways an unsatisfactory development: from the creator of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to the garrulous spouter of a sterile transcendentalism. Coleridge provided a classic case for De Quincey's accurate summing up: "Opium gives and takes away. It defeats the steady habit of exertion; but it creates spasms of irregular exertion. It ruins the natural power of life; but it develops preternatural paroxysms of intermitting power."

DOLLY MADISON ESCAPES WITH THE STATE PAPERS BEFORE THE BRITISH CAPTURE WASHINGTON

[A LETTER TO HER SISTER ANNA]

QUEEN of Washington society for almost sixteen years, Dolly Madison thus far holds the record for the time she served as "first lady". Since Jefferson was a widower, he chose the plump, good-looking wife of his Secretary of State, James Madison, for his official hostess. When Madison succeeded Jefferson in the presidency, she reigned supreme at the White House.

On a visit to Washington in 1811, Washington Irving wrote: "Mrs. Madison is a fine, portly, buxom dame, who has a smile and a pleasant word for everybody. . . . But as to Jemmy Madison—Ah, poor Jemmy!—he is but a withered little apple-John." Dolly Madison's dinners and receptions were extravagantly carried out, with a servant behind every guest at the table, with the finest wines, the choicest food, and the best entertainment. The pretty first lady shocked the Quakers, of whom she was one, by rouging her cheeks, dipping snuff, importing elaborate and expensive silks and satins from Paris, and by card-playing, which was her passion and at which she lost considerable sums of money on occasion.

All this, however, was suddenly suspended. In August, 1814, the British neared the capital city, thinking that by capturing Washington they could end the War of 1812. All the officials and many people of wealth fled the town. Dolly stayed in the White House until the very last minute. Before fleeing, she dispatched a letter to her sister Anna telling of what she had done:

“ . . . turning my spy-glass in every direction . . . ”

Tuesday, August 23, 1814

DEAR SISTER:

My husband left me yesterday morning to join General Winder. He inquired anxiously whether I had courage or firmness to remain in the President's house until his return on the morrow, or succeeding day, and on my assurance that I had no fear but for him, and the success of our army, he left, beseeching me to take care of myself, and of the Cabinet papers, public and private. I have since received two despatches from him, written with a pencil. The last is alarming, because he desires I should be ready at a moment's warning to enter my carriage, and leave the city; that the enemy seemed stronger than had at first been reported, and it might happen that they would reach the city with the intention of destroying it. I am accordingly ready; I have pressed as many Cabinet papers into trunks as to fill one carriage; our private property must be sacrificed, as it is impossible to procure wagons for its transportation.

I am determined not to go myself until I see Mr. Madison safe, so that he can accompany me, as I hear of much hostility towards him. Disaffection stalks around us. My friends and acquaintances are all gone, even Colonel C. with his hundred, who were stationed as a guard in this inclosure. French John [a faithful servant], with his usual activity and resolution, offers to spike the cannon at the gate, and lay a train of powder, which would blow up the British, should they enter the house. To the last proposition I positively object, without being able to make him understand why all advantages in war may not be taken.

Wednesday morning, twelve o' clock.—Since sunrise I have been

turning my spy-glass in every direction, and watching with unwearied anxiety, hoping to discover the approach of my dear husband and his friends; but, alas! I can descry only groups of military, wandering in all directions, as if there was a lack of arms, or of spirit to fight for their own fireside.

Three o'clock.—Will you believe it, my sister? we have had a battle, or skirmish, near Bladensburg, and here I am still, within sound of the cannon! Mr. Madison comes not. May God protect us! Two messengers, covered with dust, come to bid me fly; but here I mean to wait for him. . . . At this late hour a wagon has been procured, and I have had it filled with plate and the most valuable portable articles, belonging to the house. Whether it will reach its destination, the "Bank of Maryland", or fall into the hands of British soldiery, events must determine. Our kind friend, Mr. Carroll, has come to hasten my departure, and in a very bad humour with me, because I insist on waiting until the large picture of General Washington is secured, and it requires to be unscrewed from the wall. This process was found too tedious for these perilous moments; I have ordered the frame to be broken, and the canvas taken out. It is done! and the precious portrait placed in the hands of two gentlemen of New York, for safe keeping. And now, dear sister, I must leave this house, or the retreating army will make me a prisoner of it by filling up the road I am directed to take. When I shall again write to you, or where I shall be tomorrow, I cannot tell!

Dolly

DOLLY MADISON left practically under the compulsion of her friends. They drove her to Georgetown, where she would wait before joining the President. The British meanwhile entered Washington and immediately set fire to the public buildings and to the White House. Luckily, Dolly had saved the most valuable objects. After she had met the President, she could not resist returning to Washington. Hearing that the British had left soon after the burning, she disguised herself and returned to the deserted city. One of the Washington newspapers, commenting on the destruction of the White House, remarked that it was not a very great loss, for "we hope it will put an end to drawing rooms and levees; the resort of the idle, and the encouragers of spies and traitors."

NAPOLEON, AFTER WATERLOO, ASKS SANCTUARY OF THE ENGLISH

[A LETTER TO THE PRINCE REGENT]

THE *fine judgment of men and situations that had won Napoleon his greatness began to desert him in 1812. The Russian campaign was made against the advice of some of his most sagacious aides, and during it he committed several fatal blunders. Then came two years of trying to rectify mistakes—then Leipzig, the first abdication, and Elba. It was the record of a man, brilliant still, but without the infallibility of decision that had marked his earlier years of power.*

Something of the old Napoleon was apparent during the Hundred Days; in some ways, indeed, he never proved his genius more. The conception of the Waterloo campaign was magnificent—on paper—but he was unlucky in his subordinates or, rather, in his effect upon them. His declining faith in his star communicated itself to a bold “thruster” like Ney and completely drained Grouchy of imagination. So Waterloo was lost. The second abdication was signed on June 22. On July 9 he was exiled from France; four days later he wrote to the Prince Regent:

“ . . . I have terminated my political career . . . ”

[July 13, 1815]

ROYAL HIGHNESS:

A victim to the factions which divide my country, and to the enmity of the greatest powers of Europe, I have terminated my political career, and I come, like Themistocles, to throw myself upon the hospitality of the British people. I place myself under the protection of their laws, which I claim of your Royal Highness as of the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies.

Napoleon

THE sending of this letter cannot be excused even by the Emperor's desperate circumstances. That the cold, faithless, and completely selfish Prince Regent—the fourth George of Thackeray's unforgettable gallery—would have turned a finger for anyone—particularly Great Britain's official Public Enemy No. 1—would never have occurred to the old Napoleon. Although Las Cases, the Emperor's favoured advisor in the Waterloo days, may have suggested the letter, the mere fact that Napoleon consented to send it shows that his powers of judgment were irreparably decayed.

Of course, the Regent could not have saved Napoleon even had he wished. It was up to Lord Liverpool's administration, which—like the rest of Europe's leading politicians—was determined that Napoleon should be put in a place from which there could be no escape. St. Helena was a good choice—a rock in the South Atlantic, seventeen hundred miles from Cape Town, the nearest large port.

JANE AUSTEN DECLINES A ROYAL INVITATION TO CHANGE HER STYLE

[A LETTER TO J. S. CLARKE]

IN 1815, when Jane Austen went up to London to visit her brother and to correct the proofs of *Emma*, the fourth and last of the novels published during her lifetime, the Prince Regent, who admired her writing, invited her to inspect the beauties of Carlton House, his London residence. There she was shown round by his obsequious librarian and domestic chaplain, James Stanier Clarke, and was informed that she might dedicate her next novel to the Regent. Miss Austen, to judge by her letters, was not too dazzled by this honour, and two days later wrote Clarke to ask whether she was at liberty to dedicate the book to the Regent or whether it was incumbent on her to do so. Clarke answered by return mail: "It is certainly not incumbent on you to dedicate your work now in the Press to His Royal Highness: but if you wish to do the Regent that honour either now or at any future period, I am happy to send you that permission which need not require any more trouble or solicitation on your part."

Miss Austen decided to honour the Regent: *Emma* bore a dignified dedication to him, and in due time she received his thanks in a letter from Clarke. This brief document concluded with a remarkable proposal: "Perhaps when you again appear in print you may chuse to dedicate your volumes to Prince Leopold: any historical romance, illustrative of the history of the august House of Cobourg would just now be very interesting."

Clarke's allusion was to the approaching wedding of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg and Princess Charlotte, the Regent's daughter. The suggestion provoked a devastatingly polite reply from Miss Austen:

“ . . . *I could no more write a romance than an epic poem.*”

Chawton, near Alton, April 1, 1816

MY DEAR SIR:

I am honoured by the Prince's thanks and very much obliged to yourself for the kind manner in which you mention the work. I have also to acknowledge a former letter forwarded to me from Hans Place. I assure you I felt very grateful for the friendly tenor of it, and hope my silence will have been considered, as it was truly meant, to proceed only from an unwillingness to tax your time with idle thanks. Under every interesting circumstance which your own talents and literary labours have placed you in, or the favour of the Regent bestowed, you have my best wishes. Your recent appointments I hope are a step to something still better. In my opinion, the service of a court can hardly be too well paid, for immense must be the sacrifice of time and feeling required by it.

You are very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Saxe Cobourg, might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own

way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.

I remain, my dear Sir,
Your very much obliged, and sincere friend,
J. Austen

IN SHORT, *Miss Austen knew her métier. Clarke's suggestion might have been made with some appropriateness to Scott, who was, despite their utter dissimilarity, her complete admirer. "The big bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going," he declared, "but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary common-place things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me."*

And yet, what would not one give for a historical romance of the House of Coburg by Jane Austen!

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, FACED WITH DEBTORS'
PRISON, BEGS A LOAN

[A LETTER TO SAMUEL ROGERS]

IN 1809, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who for many years had divided his time between successful theatrical management and a Parliamentary career of such brilliance that he was compared to Burke, Fox, and the younger Pitt, suffered a financial loss from which he never recovered. In 1791, old Drury Lane Theatre was pronounced unsafe; three years later, the new building was opened. In 1809 it burned to the ground. A committee for rebuilding Drury Lane was formed, and Sheridan was given shares in the new venture. Unfortunately, Samuel Whitbread, who presided over the committee, was slowly going insane (unknown to his friends) and withheld £12,000 due to Sheridan—an action that may be said to have contributed most largely to the woes of his few remaining years.

In August, 1813, one of the greatest comic dramatists that England* has ever produced and one of her greatest orators as well (Charles James Fox had called his impeachment of Warren Hastings the best speech that he had ever heard) was arrested for debt. Whitbread was induced to send him the sum of money needed, and Sheridan was never again confined. But his affairs continued greatly involved, and less than two months before his death he sent Samuel Rogers, the banker, philanthropist, and dabbler in literature, this piteous appeal:

* Sheridan was born in Ireland but left there at the age of eight and a half.

“ . . . undone and broken-hearted.”

Saville Row, May 15, 1816

I FIND things settled so that £150 will remove all difficulty. I am absolutely undone and broken-hearted. I shall negotiate for the Plays successfully in the course of a week, when all shall be returned. I have desired Fairbrother to get back the guarantee for thirty.

They are going to put the carpets out of the window, and break into Mrs. S.'s room and *take me*—for God's sake let me see you.

R. B. S.

SHERIDAN received the money from Rogers, whose purse was always at the disposal of his needy friends. In July, 1816, he died. Immediately the rumour got around that he had lived out his last months in dire poverty and may have died through insufficient care. One of gossipy Thomas Creevey's correspondents wrote on July 12 that "I believe there is no doubt that his death was hastened, if not caused, by his distress—by his fear of arrest. . . . His dread was a prison, and he felt it staring in his face." On July 16, however, Charles Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist's son, wrote to his half-brother that "you will be soothed by learning that our father's death was unaccompanied by suffering, that he almost slumbered into death, and that the reports which you may have seen in the newspapers of the privations which he endured are unfounded; that he had every attention and comfort that could make a deathbed easy."

Whatever the facts of those last months, Sheridan received a far more splendid funeral than did Pitt and Fox and was buried in the Abbey.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, CALM AND TEMPERATE AS EVER,
FACES HIS FINANCIAL RUIN

[A LETTER TO JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART]

IN 1802, *Walter Scott advanced his friend James Ballantyne money with which to start the Border Press. The business was successful but lacked capital for expansion; in 1805 Scott became a partner, and soon the Press was flourishing in a mild sort of way. In 1809, Scott decided to branch out with Ballantyne's—through it, he became a publisher as well as a printer. This was a quixotic and, in some respects, reprehensible act, for Scott's own publisher was Constable, to whom Ballantyne's would henceforth be a rival. As Scott, though able to purvey with magnificent success to the public taste, had no idea of that public taste in general, his publishing ventures soon brought Ballantyne's to the edge of bankruptcy. Scott managed to stave off its ruin by borrowing from various friends and by agreeing to give up the publishing end of the business. Constable was involved in the arrangement, and soon Scott put through a policy of mutual accommodation between Constable and Ballantyne's that bore evil fruit a decade later.*

*From 1816 to 1822 Scott was the sole owner of Ballantyne's and during this period borrowed heavily against the business. As the *Golconda* of the *Waverley Novels* had been discovered in 1814, this practice did not seem dangerous at a time when his income from his novels alone amounted to about £8000 and sometimes more. But the point was that Scott was borrowing from a productive enterprise—Ballantyne's—to put money into a non-productive one—Abbotsford, his estate near Melrose. In 1825 the whole complicated edifice of borrowings, debentures, mortgages, and what not came tumbling down about his head when Hurst & Robinson, the London agency that acted for both Ballantyne's and Constable, failed, carrying them along.*

But Ballantyne's was Scott, though he had taken James Ballantyne again as a partner in 1822. Scott refused to declare himself bankrupt and so became responsible for debts amounting to around £130,000. This is how he broke the news of his ruin to John Gibson Lockhart, his future biographer, who had married his daughter Sophia:

“ . . . I shall beat up against this foul weather.”

Edinburgh, January 20, 1826

MY DEAR LOCKHART:

I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio fori*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements (the better thing almost of the two); to make good all claims upon Ballantyne & Co.; and even supposing that neither Hurst & Co. nor Constable & Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute—even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me; but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favourably. It is needless to add that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more—or £2,000—or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and now must pay my own.

If our friend C. had set out a fortnight earlier nothing of all this would have happened; but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow; it is an infirmity of nature.

I have made my matters public, and have had splendid offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

It is easy, no doubt, for my friend to blame me for entering into connection with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better, excluded from the Bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and—it was a price that made men's hair stand on end—£1,000 for *Marmion*. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst & Co. and Constable may be able to pay me; if 15s. in the pound; I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment.

They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

I have had visits from all the monied people, offering their purses—and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measures I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake, and for my own; for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *conn*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose.

A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,000, which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I should have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'éclat*; but that

having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results. I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as ever you saw me, and working at *Woodstock* like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best, it will be well.

Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the song and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all; and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embittered parting, and made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship.—Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately,

Walter Scott

BY THIS manly stand Sir Walter showed that his carelessness in money matters had not affected his integrity. Four days after his letter to Lockhart, he declared of his creditors: "I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds . . . to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself."

And he was as good as his word. In two years his exertions had paid off £40,000 and, at his death in 1832, the principal of the debt had been reduced to £54,000, all of which was paid off by life insurance and copyright earnings on Scott's works and on Lockhart's *Life*. But the convict labour his conscience had assigned to him told on Scott's health. In February, 1830, he had the first of several paralytic strokes. Two last novels, both sadly mediocre, appeared in 1832. Meanwhile, his mind seriously affected, Sir Walter had gone off on a Continental tour and had returned home, a dying man, in July, 1832. On September 17 he died. His last words were to Lockhart: "My dear, be a good man."

THE LOVE LETTERS OF JANE WELSH AND THOMAS CARLYLE

EVER since the publication of Jane Welsh Carlyle's letters, there have been denunciations from all sides of Thomas Carlyle's treatment of his wife. It is useless to discuss just who caused whom the greater unhappiness. Jane Welsh Carlyle had a tongue fully as sharp as Carlyle's, and she was wont to use it to good effect. She had great wit and applied it with devastating accuracy. People either liked her or admired her, especially at a distance. Her letters, like her, are satiric, witty, swift-moving, not a little crabbed at times, vivid, and imaginative. That she should have written novels instead of spending her time in housekeeping, many a critic has declared. That she should not have married Thomas Carlyle is a waste of romanticising: there would perhaps be no letters—a heritage equal to all but the best of novels.

Thomas Carlyle was crotchety, ill-tempered, had pecuniary difficulties most of his life, remained the dour Scotsman, lacked a spontaneous sense of humour, and neglected everything—including Jane—for his work. They knew what they were getting into when they married; they both got what they wanted: he success, and she a genius for a husband.

JANE WELSH ASSURES THOMAS CARLYLE THAT SHE
WILL BE "REALLY A VERY MEEK-TEMPERED WIFE"

AWIT and a beauty, Jane Baillie Welsh was called by the villagers "the flower of Haddington". She captivated many young men but took only one seriously—Edward Irving—and he had pledged himself elsewhere when she was still a girl. Now, he could not bring himself to break the engagement, even though he loved Jane Welsh. In June, 1821, Irving introduced Thomas Carlyle, his friend and fellow schoolmaster, to Jane. Carlyle immediately began to correspond with her and send her books. She admired his learning, as he her intelligence, and eagerly kept up the correspondence. Meanwhile Irving married and sent her his letters of farewell.

Carlyle's letters became more and more demanding. He wanted to marry her. In 1823 she wrote him that she would never be his wife. They continued, nevertheless, to write to one another, discussing his work, her adventures, literary opinions, and their feelings for one another. After one of their quarrels, in the spring of 1824 she promised that she would become his wife if he could gain financial independence. Then she told him the story of her love for Irving. Carlyle was deeply touched by her admission and even asked her not to sacrifice herself to one so full of "strange dark humours". By this time Jane had made up her mind. Carlyle had genius, would become famous, and she thought she loved him. Both her mother and his did not approve of the match. Mrs. Welsh thought Carlyle irreligious, bad-tempered, and socially inferior to her daughter. Mrs. Carlyle doubted if the delicate girl could live the harsh, frugal life demanded of her by a husband who could provide no luxuries.

Finally, Carlyle saved up two hundred pounds and pressed the issue. They became engaged and at last were to be wed. Before their marriage, Jane Welsh told Carlyle what she would be like as his wife:

“ . . . when you fly from my caresses to—smoke tobacco . . . ”

Templand, Tuesday, October 3, 1826

UNKIND that you are ever to suffer me to be cast down, when it is so easy a thing for you to lift me to the Seventh Heaven! My soul was darker than midnight, when your pen said “let there be light”, and there was light as at the bidding of the Word. And now I am resolved in spirit and even joyful,—joyful even in the face of the dreaded ceremony, of *starvation*, and every possible fate. Oh, my dearest Friend! be always *so* good to me, and I shall make the best and happiest Wife. When I read in your looks and words that you love me, I feel it in the deepest part of my soul; then I care not one straw for the whole Universe beside; but when you fly from my caresses to—smoke tobacco, or speak of me as a new *circumstance* of your lot, then indeed my “heart is troubled about many things.”

My Mother is not come yet, but is expected this week; the week following must be given to her to take a last look at her Child; and then, Dearest, God willing, I am your own for ever and ever.

This day fortnight would suit *me* better than Thursday; for, you know, after the proclaiming one is not fit to be seen, and therefore the sooner we get away the better. But then it would not suit—the Carriers? unless, perhaps you could send your things the week before, or leave them to follow after you. However, the difference of two days is of no such moment in my mind that you may not fix whichever *you* find most convenient. So determine and let me know.

With respect to the proclamation, I am grieved to say I can give you no comfort; for not only must you be proclaimed like any common man, in your own Parish, but send a line from the Minister certifying you *unmarried*, before they will proclaim us here. Mr. Anderson, for his own part, would require nothing of the sort; but his Elders, he says, are mighty sticklish about forms. They would not register the marriage unless it were gone about in the regular way.—It is a pity! But, after all, the *crying* is the least of it.

Will you and John come here the night before, or not? Which ever way you like. If you come, I have a notion I will not see you; but I cannot say positively at this distance. Oh mercy! What I would give to be sitting in our doll's-house married for a week!

Have you spoken to Jane yet about coming to us? and will she trust herself to my sisterly care? I would not have her for a month or two,—till I have got over the first awkwardness of such a change, and my wits are recovered from the bewilderment of the new world about me, sufficiently to look to her welfare. Surely we should feel happier for having the good little creature with us; and the arrangement, I trust, would not be without benefit to herself. For my own share in it, I engage to be a true kind Sister to her, and an instructor as far as I can. Tell her this, if you see good; and give her a kiss in my name. I may well return *one* out of *twenty*. But indeed, Dear, these kisses on paper are scarce worth keeping. You gave me one on my neck that night you were in such good-humour, and one on my lips on some forgotten occasion, that I would not part with for a hundred thousand paper ones. Perhaps some day or other, I shall get none of either sort: *sic transit gloria mundi* [so passes the glory of the world]!

Have you heard of Mrs. Strachey yet? I have! with a vengeance! Mrs. Montagu in her last Letter coolly denounces her as an "*Arch-fiend*!" And you, Thomas Carlyle, uphold her an Angel of light! I wonder which I am to believe? Something whispers, Mrs. Montagu. Is it jealousy think you? Oh no, for I do firmly believe that had Julia Strachey been Jane Welsh, and I Julia Strachey,

you would still have had the grace to love *me* best. Yes, and I should have loved you too, and then! Mercy! what a *burble* would have come of it? Things are better ordered considerably as they are, I'm thinking.

There came a Letter from my pretty Cousin, Phoebe Baillie, the other night, almost sentimental, for a wonder. The Girl has taken it into her head, and not without reason, that my grave Help-mate will hardly be able to endure her; so she conjures us, in all seriousness, not to discard her utterly, and thereby blast her hopes of ever becoming more wise! You will surely let me teach her German, Dear? I promised, and you would not have me break my word. Besides the poor little soul has none to speak one true word to her but only me; and her follies, I would fain persuade myself, are more of education than of nature. But you shall see her in good time, and judge for yourself; and then, not my will be done, but thine. I am going to be really a very meek-tempered Wife. Indeed, I am begun to be meek-tempered already. My Aunt tells me she could live forever with *me* without quarrelling,—I am so reasonable and equal in my humour. There is something to gladden your heart withal! And more than this; my Grandfather observed while I was supping my porridge last night, that "She was really a *douce* peaceable body that *Pen*!" So you perceive, my good Sir, the fault will be wholly your own, if we do not get on most harmoniously together.—My Grandfather has been particularly picturesque these two days. On coming down stairs on Sunday evening, I found him poring over *Wilhelm Meister*! "A strange choice," I observed by way of taking the first word with him, "for Sunday reading." But he answered me quite sharply, "Not at all Miss; the Book is a very *good* Book: it is all about David and Goliath!"—But I must stop. And this is my last Letter! What a thought! How terrible, and yet full of bliss! You will love me forever, will you not, my own Husband? and I will always be your true and affectionate

Jane Welsh

THOMAS CARLYLE VOWS THAT THEY WILL LIVE BUT
FOR EACH OTHER

WITH the profits from the German Romances Carlyle could pay the expenses of the wedding. One week before the event he was already a somewhat bewildered, but none the less acidulous, bridegroom-to-be. Having made all the preparations, he notified Jane just how he felt before the coming ordeal :

“ . . . I have at length got that certificate . . . ”

Scotsbrig, Monday-night, October 9, 1826

“THE Last Speech and *marrying* words of that unfortunate young woman Jane Baillie *Welsh*,” I received on Friday-morning; and truly a most delightful and swan-like melody was in them; a tenderness and warm devoted trust, worthy of such a maiden bidding farewell to the (unmarried) Earth, of which she was the fairest ornament. Dear little Child! How is it that I have deserved thee; deserved a purer and nobler heart than falls to the lot of millions? I swear I will love thee with *my* whole heart, and think my life well spent if it can make thine happy.

In fine, these preliminaries are in the way towards adjustment. After some vain galloping and consultation, I have at length got that certificate which the Closeburn Session in their sapience deem necessary; I have ordered the Proclaiming of Banns in this Parish of Middlebie, and written out a Note giving order for it in your Parish of Closeburn. Pity, by the way, that there is no

man in the Closeburn Church possessed of any little fraction of vulgar earthly logic! It might have saved me a ride to Hoddam Manse this morning (the good Yorstoun my native Parson was away), and a most absurd application to the "glass Minister" my neighbour. One would think that after fair *crying* three times through the organs of Archibald Blacklock, this certificate of celibacy would be like gilding refined gold, or adding a perfume to the violet: for would not my existing wife, in case I had one, forthwith, at the first hum from Archibald's windpipe, start up in her place, and state aloud that *she* had "objections"?—But I will not quarrel with these Reverend men; *laissez les faire*, they will buckle us fast enough at length, and for the *How* I care not.

Your own day, Tuesday, as was fitting, I have made mine. Jack and I will surely call on Monday evening at Templand, most likely *after* tea; but I think it will be more commodious for all parties that we sleep at the Inn. You will not see me on Monday-night? I bet two to one you will! At all events I hope you will on Tuesday; so, as Jack says, "it is much the same."

All hands are sorting, packing, rummaging and rioting here. To Jane I read her part of your Letter; she will accompany us in our Edinburgh sojourn with all the pleasure in the world. Jack will bring her out, when we want her: she may try the household for awhile; if it suit she will have cause to love her Sister for her life long.

Your Mother will take down this Note to the Minister, and appoint the hour? I think, it should be an early one, for we have far to go. Perhaps also she might do something towards engaging post-horses at the Inn; but I suppose there is little fear of failure in that point.

Do you know aught of wedding-gloves? I must leave all that to you; for except a vague tradition of some such thing I am profoundly ignorant concerning the whole matter. Or will you give *any*? *Ach du guter Gott!* Would we were off and away, three months before all these observations of the Ceremonial Law!

Yet fear not, Darling; for it must and will be all accomplished, and I admitted to thy bosom and thy heart, and we two made *one*

life in the sight of God and man! O my own Jane! I could say much; and what were words to the sea of thoughts that rolls thro' my heart, when I feel that thou art mine, that I am thine, that henceforth we live not for ourselves but for each other! Let us pray to God that our holy purposes be not frustrated; let us trust in Him and in each other, and fear no evil that can befall us. My last blessing as a Lover is with you; this is my last Letter to Jane Welsh: my first blessing as a Husband, my first kiss to Jane Carlyle is at hand! O my Darling! I will always love thee.

Good night, then, for the last time we have to part! In a week I see you, in a week you are my own! Adieu *Meine Eigene!*

In haste, I am forever yours,

T. Carlyle

ON OCTOBER 17, 1826, at Templand, Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh were married. They moved to a small cottage, and it did not take long for them to run into money troubles. She had to do all her housework, which Carlyle thought "the saving charm of her life". For months they would see no friends, and for long stretches of time they would not speak to one another. He would seclude himself in a separate room and set to work, while she would be left alone with her household tasks and her books.

Jane's health had never been very good, and under the strain of her harsh existence she was often ill. They quarrelled with one another, insulted each other, could not bear each other's friends, and yet they found some happiness. Carlyle's growing literary reputation meant more money, less seclusion, and more friends. She gloried in his success as much as he did. To a friend, she once admitted that she had married "for ambition". Her faith in Carlyle's genius never deserted her for one moment. With Sartor Resartus, The French Revolution, Cromwell, and Frederick the Great, she saw her convictions proved.

In 1863 Jane was knocked down by a cab and suffered intensely from her injuries. Throughout her illness Carlyle attended her with tender care. His successes had brought him closer to his wife and made him more

cognisant of what he owed her. Her last years were probably their happiest.

Jane Carlyle invited some friends to tea on April 21, 1866, and decided to go for a drive in the brougham Carlyle had bought her. She took a little dog with her and let it out for a run. A carriage came along and ran over it, whereupon she leaped out and lifted it into her carriage. The driver continued, and when they reached home she was found sitting with folded hands in the brougham, dead. Carlyle secluded himself after her death. To his brother he wrote : "To me her loss has been the loss of all that made life valuable ; and I do not seem to gather much insensibility to it : but at all hours of the day, and every turn of my procedures in the world, am painfully reminded that she, my bright fellow-pilgrim, has gone from me beyond the stars, and that the rest of my journey must be done wearily alone."

JOHN RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE WRITES A DISSERTATION UPON COLD LAMB

[A LETTER TO JOHN MARSHALL]

ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1882, Henry Adams wrote to John Hay that "I am bored to death by correcting the proofs of a very dull book about John Randolph, the fault of which is the enforced obligation to take that lunatic monkey au sérieux. I . . . was obliged to treat him as though he were respectable." Adams had a great contempt for the eccentricity of others.

John Randolph of Roanoke was an unbelievable character, as near to anything America has produced to compare with the fantastic milords of the mother country. One of America's greatest orators, he made his maiden speech stumping the county against Patrick Henry, who was fighting his last campaign. For more than a quarter of a century he served his country according to his lights—which were often very strange: he was known to support a bill one day and oppose its passage the next. By and large, however, his platform was states' rights and liberty, both planks of which he interpreted according to the whimsicalities of his character at a particular moment. He early fell foul of Henry Clay, whom he nicknamed the "Cock of Kentucky" and characterised as "so brilliant, yet so corrupt, which, like a rotting mackerel by moonlight, shines and stinks." Finally the two fought a duel in 1826, after Randolph had referred sarcastically to Clay's accepting the secretaryship of state in John Quincy Adams' cabinet as "the combination of the Puritan with the Blackleg."

Besides being a statesman, Randolph was a lord of many acres. When he moved to Roanoke plantation, in Charlotte County, Virginia, in 1810, he began to use the territorial suffix "of Roanoke", quite as if he were a baron of the Middle Ages. Although he often lacked ready money,

he owned eight thousand acres, four hundred slaves, and a stud of blooded horses. In short, he was a grand seigneur who never wore any but London boots and who never opened a Bible that had not been printed at Oxford.

Many of Randolph's ideas were patriarchal, one of them being that women should know—and keep—their place. In this letter to John Marshall, written shortly after Randolph's return from a ten-day embassy to Russia (for which he put in a bill against the government of \$21,407 for services), he amusingly gave his slant on the female question in 1831:

“So much for the ladies, charming creatures . . .”

[Roanoke, December 17, 1831]

DEAR MARSHALL:

On taking out my chariot this morning, for the first time, since I got from your house, to clean it and the harness (for the dreadful weather has frozen us all up until today), the knife was found in the bottom of the carriage, where it must have been dropped from a shallow waist-coat pocket, as I got in at your door, for I missed the knife soon afterwards. When I got home, I had the pockets of the chariot searched, and everything there taken out, and it was not until John had searched strictly into my port-manteau and bag, taking out everything therein, that I became perfectly convinced of what I was before persuaded, that I had left the knife in my chamber in your house on Tuesday the 6th, and, when I heard it had not been seen, I took it for granted that your little yellow boy, having “found it”, had, according to the negro code of morality, appropriated it to himself. In this, it seems I was mistaken, and I ask his pardon as the best amends I can make to him; and, at the same time to relieve you and Mrs. M. from the unpleasant feeling that such a suspicion would

occasion, I dispatch this note by a special messenger, although I have a certain conveyance tomorrow. I make no apology to yourself or to Mrs. M. for the frank expression of my suspicion, because *truth* is the Goddess at whose shrine I worship, and no Huguenot in France, or Morisco in Spain, or Judaising Christian in Portugal ever paid more severely for his heretical schism than I have done in leaving the established church of *falsehood* and *grimace*.

I am well aware that ladies are as delicate as they are charming creatures, and that, in our intercourse with them, we must strain the truth as far as possible. Brought up from their earliest infancy to disguise their real sentiments (for a woman would be a monster who did not practise this disguise) it is their privilege to be insincere, and we should despise [them] and justly too, if they had that manly frankness and reserve, which constitutes the ornament of our character, as the very reverse does of theirs. We must, therefore, keep this in view in all of our intercourse with them, and recollect that, as our point of honour is courage and frankness, theirs is chastity and dissimulation, for, as I said before, a woman who does not dissemble her real feelings is a monster of impudence. Now, therefore, it does so happen (as Mr. Canning would say) that truth is very offensive to the ears of a lady when to those of a gentleman (her husband for instance) it would be not at all so. To illustrate—Mrs. Randolph of Bizarre, my brother's widow, was beyond all comparison the nicest and best house-wife that I ever saw. Not one drop of water was suffered to stand upon her sideboard, except what was in the pitcher, the house from cellar to garret, and in every part [was] as clean as hands could make it, and everything as it should be to suit even my fastidious taste.

I lived there after my brother's death from 1796 to 1810, inclusive, and never did I see or *smell* anything to offend my senses or my imagination *but once*. The chamber pots were as sweet and as clean as the tea-cups, being constantly washed and sunned, and the necessary was as clean as the parlour, and, except in autumn, I would defy you to find a leaf or a feather in the yard. No poultry were permitted to come into it; and we had no dirty children,

white or negro, to make litter and filth. A strong enclosure of *sawn* plank, eight feet high, fenced in the kitchen, smoke-house, ice-house, pigeon house, veal-house, and wood-house, in which the wood for the use of the house was stacked away under lock and key. The turkey and hen houses were in the same enclosure, which had two doors, one next the dwelling house, for the use of the mistress and house servants, and large enough to admit a wagon on the back or north side; beyond which was a well built quarter, with two brick chimneys and two rooms and four rooms without for servants. There was also what I had forgot, a spinning and weaving house. At night, the doors of this enclosure were locked up, not a servant being allowed to sleep within it, although every one of them was in sound of the lady's bell. On one unhappy day, in a very hot and damp spell of weather of long continuance, a piece of cold lamb was brought to table that was spoiled, the first and last instance in nearly fifteen years of the slightest neglect in household economy. I ordered the waiter to take it away; it being spoiled. Mrs. R. resented this and flatly contradicted me, and, altho' the lamb absolutely *stunk*, she ate a part of it to prove her words true; and was affronted with me almost past forgiveness. I dare say, if I had not noticed the lamb, she might have given a hint to the servant to take it away, but the honest, naked truth was not to be borne. We had no company but Dudley and her younger son, then school boys, and an Englishman named Knowles, who acted as overseer or steward, and dined with us until he took to drink.

Mrs. R. stoutly denied that the lamb *could* be spoiled, because it had been boiled only the day before and had been in the ice-house ever since. I admitted her facts but denied her *logic*, which was *truly a woman's*. I maintained that the highest evidence was that of the senses, that we must reason *from* facts, where we could get at them, and it was only where we could not that it was fair to argue from probabilities; that the lamb *stunk*, and, therefore, was not sound. This she denied, and, to prove her words, actually made a shift to swallow half a mouthful, which, under other circumstances, she would not have done for a thousand dollars.

So much for the ladies, charming creatures, the salt of the earth, whom, like Uncle Toby and all other old bachelors, I never could thoroughly understand for want of the key of matrimony, which alone can unlock their secrets and make plain (as many a husband can tell) all the apparent contradictions in their character. Yes, so much for the fairer and better part of the creation; as from my soul I believe them to be, but who, as the Waverly man says of kings, are *Kittle Cattle* to shoe behind, and so it ought to be, for it is their poor and almost only privilege to *kick*, while we roam where we will, and they must sit still until they are asked. I, therefore, am for upholding them in all their own proper privileges, so long as they don't encroach upon those of men. A woman who unsexes herself deserves to be treated and will be treated as a man.

DESPITE his gibe at "*the negro code of morality*", Randolph of Roanoke freed his slaves in his will. The same curious document directed that he be buried facing west so that he could keep an eye on Henry Clay.

THOMAS CARLYLE RELATES HOW JOHN STUART MILL'S
CARELESSNESS CAUSED THE DESTRUCTION OF
THE MANUSCRIPT OF *THE FRENCH REVOLUTION*

[A LETTER TO HIS BROTHER JOHN]

JOHN STUART MILL *was responsible both for Thomas Carlyle's French Revolution and for part of its destruction. Carlyle and Mill met in 1832, when Mill became, in Carlyle's words, "a partial disciple of mine". Both men were interested in literature and politics, especially French politics. Mill had meditated writing a history of the French Revolution but surrendered the idea to Carlyle. Not only did the two discuss various problems associated with the task, but Mill lent Carlyle "barrowfuls" of books for reference and research.*

"The French Revolution stands pretty fairly in my head," Carlyle wrote to a friend, "nor do I mean to investigate much more about it, but to splash down what I know in large masses of colours, that it may look like a smoke-and-flame conflagration in the distance." In the early spring of 1835 Carlyle completed the first volume of the manuscript. Mill borrowed it from Carlyle, for he was eager to read the work for which he was partially responsible.

Carelessly, Mill left the manuscript about the house of his friend, Mrs. Taylor, whose servant, mistaking it for waste-paper, destroyed it. Mill, badly shaken, went immediately to the Carlyles' home to notify them of the accident. Carlyle was so moved by Mill's distress that for once his violent temper and acid tongue did not come into play. Five months' actual work and years of preparation had been ruined. Mill offered restitution, but money could hardly compensate for the loss. Nevertheless, when Mill left the house, Carlyle turned to Jane and said, "Well, Mill, poor fellow, is terribly cut up; we must endeavour to hide

from him how very serious this business is to us." How serious it really was he told his brother John:

" . . . gone like a whiff of smoke."

Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London,
23rd March, 1835

MY DEAR BROTHER:

Your Letter came in this morning (after sixteen days from Rome); and, tomorrow, being post-day, I have shoved my writing-table into the corner, and sit (with my back to the fire and Jane, who is busy sewing at my old jupe of a Dressing-gown), forthwith making answer. It was somewhat longed for; yet I felt, in other respects, that it was better you had not written sooner; for I had a thing to dilate upon, of a most ravelled character, that was better to be knit up a little first. You shall hear. But do not be alarmed; for it is "neither death nor men's lives": we are all well, and I heard out of Annandale within these three weeks, nay, Jane's Newspaper came with the customary "two strokes", only five days ago. I meant to write to our Mother last night; but shall now do it tomorrow.

Mill had borrowed that first volume of my poor *French Revolution* (pieces of it more than *once*), that he might have it all before him, and write down some observations on it, which perhaps I might print as Notes. I was busy meanwhile with Volume Second; toiling along like a *Nigger*, but with the heart of a free Roman: indeed, I know not how it was, I had not felt so clear and independent, sure of myself and of my task for many long years. Well, one night about three weeks ago, we sat at tea, and Mill's short rap was heard at the door: Jane rose to welcome him; but he stood there unresponsive, pale, the very picture of despair; said,

half-articulately gasping, that she must go down and speak to "Mrs. Taylor". After some considerable additional gasping, I learned from Mill this fact: that my poor Manuscript, all except some four tattered leaves, was *annihilated*: He had left it out (too carelessly); it had been taken for waste-paper: and so five months of as tough labour as I could remember of, were as good as vanished, gone like a whiff of smoke.—There never in my life had come upon me any other *accident* of so much moment; but this I could not but feel to be a sore one. The thing was *lost*, and perhaps worse; for I had not only forgotten all the structure of it, but the spirit it was written with was past; only the general impression seemed to remain, and the recollection that I was on the whole well satisfied with that, and could now hardly hope to equal it.

Mill whom I had to comfort and speak peace to remained injudiciously enough till almost midnight, and my poor Dame and I had to sit talking of different matters; and could not till then get our lament freely uttered. *She* was very good to me; and the thing did not beat us. I felt in general that I was as a little schoolboy, who had laboriously written out his Copy as he could, and was showing it not without satisfaction to the Master: but lo! the Master had suddenly torn it, saying: "No boy, thou must go and write it *better*." What could I do but sorrowing go and try to obey.

That night was a hard one; something from time to time tying me tight as it were all around the region of the heart, and strange dreams haunting me: however, I was not without good thoughts too that came like healing life into me; and I got it somewhat reasonably crushed down, not abolished, yet subjected to me with the resolution and prophecy of abolishing. Next morning accordingly I wrote to Fraser (who had *advertised* the book as "preparing for publication") that it was all gone back; that he must not *speak of it* to any one (till it was made good again); finally that he must send me some *better paper*, and also a *Biographie Universelle*, for I was determined to risk ten pounds more upon it. Poor Fraser was very assiduous: I got bookshelves put up (for the whole House

was *flowing* with Books) where the Biographie (not Fraser's however, which was countermanded, but Mill's), with much else stands all ready, much readier than before: and so, having first finished out the piece I was actually upon, I began *again* at the beginning.

Early the day after tomorrow (after a hard and quite novel kind of battle) I count on having the First Chapter on paper a second time, no worse than it was, though considerably different. The bitterness of the business is past therefore; and you must conceive me toiling along in that new way for many weeks to come. As for Mill I must tell you the best side of him. Next day after the accident he writes me a passionate letter requesting with boundless earnestness to be allowed to make the loss good as far as *money* was concerned in it. I answered: Yes, since he so desired it; for in our circumstances it was not unreasonable: in about a week he accordingly transmits me a draft for £200; I had computed that my five months' housekeeping, etc., had cost me £100; which sum therefore and not two hundred was the one, I told him, I could take. He has been here since then; but has not sent the £100, though I suppose he will soon do it, and so the thing will end—more handsomely than one could have expected.

I ought to draw from it various practical "uses of improvement" (among others not to lend manuscripts again); and above all things try to do the work *better* than it was; in which case I shall never grudge the labour, but reckon it a goodhap.—It really seemed to me a Book of considerable significance; and not unlikely even to be of some interest at present: but that latter, and indeed all economical and other the like considerations had become profoundly indifferent to me; I felt that I was honestly writing down and delineating a World-Fact (which the Almighty had brought to pass in the world); that it was an *honest* work for me, and all men might do and say of it simply what seemed good to *them*—Nay I have got back my spirits again (after this first Chapter), and hope I shall go on tolerably. I will struggle assiduously to be done with it by the time you are to be looked for (which meeting may God bring happily to pass); and in that case I will cheerfully throw the

business down awhile, and walk off with you to Scotland; hoping to be ready for the next publishing season.—This is my ravelled concern, dear Jack; which you see is in the way to knit itself up again, before I am called to tell you of it.

And now for something else. I was for writing to you of it next day after it happened: but Jane suggested, it would only grieve you, till I could say it was in the way towards adjustment; which counsel I saw to be right. Let us hope assuredly that the whole will be for good. . . . Good night, dear Brother!

Ever yours!

MILL sent the money as he promised and, indeed, the Carlyles badly needed it. *"My friends think I have found the art of living on nothing,"* Carlyle wrote. Valiantly he set to work again to rewrite the destroyed volume, and by September of the same year he finished it. The torment he went through during the writing of the complete book he described vividly in his *Reminiscences*: *"I shall finish this book, throw it at your feet, buy a rifle and spade, and withdraw to the Transatlantic wilderness."* To his wife he said, *"What they will do with this book none knows, my lass; but they have not had for two hundred years any book that came more truly from a man's very heart, and so let them trample it under foot and hoof as they see best."* Carlyle was over-pessimistic. They did not trample it under foot; Thackeray praised it in a review, the literary greats of the time acknowledged Carlyle's talent, and his reputation soared. At first the book did not sell well in London, but from America, through Emerson's good offices, Carlyle received considerable profits.

Mill and Carlyle remained friends for some time, though Carlyle did remark that *"his talk is sawdustish, like ale when there is no wine to be had."* But when Carlyle fully developed his theories of the "strong" ruler and the rigid control of the masses, they drifted apart. Carlyle was rather puzzled at just what caused this: *"He had taken a great attachment to me (which lasted about ten years and then suddenly ended, I never knew how), an altogether clear, logic, honest, amicable, affectionate young*

man, and respected as such here, though sometimes felt to be rather colourless, even aqueous, no religion in any form traceable in him." Carlyle had written: "*The strong man, what is he? The wise man.*" "*The strong thing is the right thing.*" "*The first duty of a people is to find—which means to accept—their chief; their second and last to obey him.*" How could John Stuart Mill, the author of *Liberty*, remain Thomas Carlyle's friend?

BENJAMIN DISRAELI GIVES A POLITICAL OPPONENT BLOW FOR BLOW

[A LETTER TO DANIEL O'CONNELL]

DISRAELI'S altercation with Daniel O'Connell, one of Parnell's predecessors as the champion of Irish liberties, is one of the classics of political buffoonery.

When the future Earl of Beaconsfield first stood for Parliament, he asked O'Connell to send him a letter of recommendation on the grounds that they were both Radical Reformers. O'Connell complied. Of course, Disraeli was no more a Radical Reformer than Louis XIV, and he was twice rejected as one. When he stood for Taunton in 1837 as an out-and-out Tory or Conservative (the latter term had begun to come into vogue several years before), he was ungrateful enough to call O'Connell an incendiary—or so it was reported—by a misrepresenting busybody, Disraeli said. In itself, it was a ridiculous charge: the *Liberator* (as O'Connell was called) was anything but a revolutionary (he was a kindly, lazy, non-“improving” landlord, and his estates were said to be models of everything they should not have been). He wanted a separate Parliament for Ireland, disabilities against Catholics removed—little else—and he was prepared to ally himself with anyone, Whig or Tory, who would promise to help his cause. When he was attacked by Disraeli as an incendiary, he was coquetting with the Whig leader, Viscount Melbourne.

As soon as O'Connell read the accounts—misrepresentations?—of Disraeli's Taunton speech, he prepared to get even, which he did, a few days later, in a speech in Dublin. This master of vituperation said, in part: “His name shows he is by descent a Jew. His father became a convert. He is the better for that in this world, and I hope he will be the better for it in the next. I have the happiness of being acquainted with some Jewish families in London, and among them more accomplished

ladies, or more humane, cordial, high-minded, or better-educated gentlemen I have never met. It will not be supposed therefore that when I speak of D'Israeli as the descendent of a Jew, I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants amongst them however, also, and it must certainly have been from one of these that D'Israeli descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died on the cross, whose name, I verily believe, must have been D'Israeli. For aught I know, the present D'Israeli is descended from him, and, with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died on the Cross."

Duels were still being fought in 1835, and ordinarily the thing for Disraeli to do would have been to call O'Connell out. Unfortunately for the melodrama of the situation, O'Connell, a man of sixty years to Disraeli's less than thirty-five, was protected against accepting a challenge by the fact that he had bound himself over to keep the peace after killing a man in a duel in 1815. Therefore, Disraeli sent the challenge to O'Connell's son, an M.P. of exactly his own age, who refused, however, to be responsible for his father's own words. Disraeli thereupon sent the following letter to The Times:

" . . . you had dropped your filth . . . "

London, May 6 [1835]

MR. O'CONNELL:

Although you have long placed yourself out of the pale of civilisation, still I am one who will not be insulted, even by a Yahoo, without chastising it. When I read this morning in the same journals your virulent attack upon myself, and that your son was at the same moment paying the penalty of similar virulence to another individual on whom you had dropped your filth, I thought that the consciousness that your opponents had at length

discovered a source of satisfaction might have animated your insolence to unwonted energy, and I called upon your son to re-assume his vicarious office of yielding satisfaction for his shrinking sire. But it seems that gentleman declines the further exercise of the pleasing duty of enduring the consequences of your libertine harangues. I have no other means, therefore, of noticing your effusion but this public mode. Listen, then, to me.

If it had been possible for you to act like a gentleman, you would have hesitated before you made your foul and insolent comments upon a hasty and garbled report of a speech which scarcely contains a sentence or an expression as they emanated from my mouth; but the truth is, you were glad to seize the first opportunity of pouring forth your venom against a man whom it serves the interest of your party to represent as a political apostate.

In 1831, when Mr. O'Connell expressed to the electors of Wycombe his anxiety to assist me in my election, I came forward as the opponent of the party in power, and which I described in my address as "a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction"—the English Whigs, who in the ensuing year denounced you as a traitor from the Throne, and every one of whom, only a few months back, you have anathematised with all the peculiar graces of a tongue practised in scurrility. You are the patron of these men now, Mr. O'Connell: you, forsooth, are "devoted" to them. I am still their uncompromising opponent. Which of us is the most consistent?

You say that I was once a Radical, and now that I am a Tory. My conscience acquits me of ever having deserted a political friend, or ever having changed a political opinion. I worked for a great and avowed end in 1831, and that was the restoration of the balance of parties in the state, a result which I believed to be necessary to the honour of the realm and the happiness of the people. I never advocated a measure which I did not believe tended to this result, and if there be any measures which I then urged, and now am not disposed to press, it is because that great result is obtained.

In 1831 I should have been very happy to have laboured for this object with Mr. O'Connell, with whom I had no personal acquaintance, but who was a member of the Legislature, remarkable for his political influence, his versatile talents, and his intense hatred and undisguised contempt of the Whigs.

Since 1831 we have met only once; but I have a lively recollection of my interview with so distinguished a personage. Our conversation was of great length; I had a very ample opportunity of studying your character. I thought you a very amusing, a very interesting, but a somewhat over-rated man. I am sure on that occasion I did not disguise from you my political views: I spoke with a frankness which I believe is characteristic of my disposition. I told you I was not a sentimental, but a practical politician; that what I chiefly desired to see was the formation of a strong but constitutional Government, that would maintain the Empire, and that I thought if the Whigs remained in office they would shipwreck the State. I observed then, as was my habit, that the Whigs must be got rid of at any price. It seemed to me that you were much of the same opinion as myself; but our conversation was very general. We formed no political alliance, and for a simple reason—I concealed neither from yourself, nor from your friends, that the repeal of the Union was an impassable gulf between us, and that I could not comprehend, after the announcement of such an intention, how any English party could co-operate with you. Probably you then thought that the English Movement might confederate with you on a system of mutual assistance, and that you might exchange and circulate your accommodation measures of destruction; but even Mr. O'Connell, with his lively faith in Whig feebleness and Whig dishonesty, could scarcely have imagined that in the course of twelve months his fellow-conspirators were to be my Lord Melbourne and the Marquis of Lansdowne.

I admire your scurrilous allusions to my origin. It is quite clear that the "hereditary bondsman" has already forgotten the clank of his fetter. I know the tactics of your Church; it clam-

ours for toleration, and it labours for supremacy. I see that you are quite prepared to persecute.

With regard to your taunts as to my want of success in my election contests, permit me to remind you that I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. No threatening skeletons canvassed for me; a death's-head and cross-bones were not blazoned on my banners. My pecuniary resources, too, were limited; I am not one of those public beggars that we see swarming with their obtrusive boxes in the chapels of your creed, nor am I in possession of a princely revenue wrung from a starving race of fanatical slaves. Nevertheless, I have a deep conviction that the hour is at hand when I shall be more successful, and take my place in that proud assembly of which Mr. O'Connell avows his wish no longer to be a member. I expect to be a representative of the people before the repeal of the Union. We shall meet at Philippi: and rest assured that, confident in a good cause, and in some energies which have been not altogether unproved, I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will make you at the same time remember and repent the insults that you have lavished upon

Benjamin Disraeli

WILLIAM FLAVELLE MONYPENNY, who began the exhaustive biography of Disraeli that was to be finished by George Earle Buckle, wrote rather dryly of his hero's skirmish with O'Connell that it "had at least made him notorious." In his diary, Disraeli noted the "row with O'Connell in which I greatly distinguish myself."

Disraeli made it up with O'Connell before the latter's death in 1847, but they never became close friends. In the early sixties, Disraeli wrote that "Croker, Peel, and O'Connell sent me, I may say, messages of peace before they died—literally O'Connell. . . . He sent me a message that it had always been heavy on his heart that there should have been a misunderstanding between us. . . . He always made me a very reverential bow afterwards."

HONORÉ DE BALZAC, PAYING A VISIT TO GEORGE SAND,
FINDS HER SMOKING A CIGAR

[A LETTER TO MADAME HANSKA]

HONORÉ DE BALZAC for a good part of his life outsmarted his creditors. For if he had no money he could sit down and write a book to pay off his debts. Naturally, he published them under noms de plume, generally anagrams of his own name. But Balzac was not the man to be satisfied with these small profits. All his life, even when the money was flowing from his success with the *Comédie humaine*, he evolved fantastic schemes for getting rich : he proposed to re-dig the old Roman silver mines in Sardinia (a friend, however, cheated him by arriving first and actually became wealthy) ; he proposed to grow pineapples in hot-houses he would establish in the open fields near his country home and sell them at his own shops ; hearing of a supposed treasure that Toussaint l' Ouverture had buried in France, he persuaded even Jules Sandeau and Théophile Gautier to accompany him on the exploit. The way he finally made enough money, however, was the way he started out : by writing.

"What he conquered with the sword," Balzac inscribed on a statuette of Napoleon in his study, "I will conquer with the pen." Accordingly, he spent most of his hours labouring on his novels. He would have an early dinner, go to sleep from between seven to eight in the evening, arise at midnight, work until the light came up (but often sixteen hours at a stretch), visit his friends, and start the round over again. Someone remarked that he "lived on fifty thousand cups of coffee and died on fifty thousand cups of coffee." Indeed, as he himself related, the Parisians thought that his brown complexion came from the amount of coffee he drank. When a novel would be complete in manuscript it was by no means finished. He was the bane of typesetters but the delight of printers. Half of his profits went for corrections on proof sheets. Once the novel was set in type,

Balzac would almost double the length of the book by additions and corrections. He needed at least eight or nine proofs before he was sufficiently satisfied with the book and would allow it to be printed.

Balzac found time, nevertheless, to travel around and to spend days going the social rounds. In 1833, at Neuchâtel, he met Evelina Hanska, the wife of a Polish-Russian count. Madame Hanska had written an anonymous letter, as *l'Étrangère*, to Balzac, praising his work and asking him to look more on the spiritual side of life. Correspondence followed, and she agreed to meet him. Later that same year, at Geneva, Madame Hanska agreed to marry him as soon as her aged husband died. In the meantime they would correspond and occasionally see one another at intervals of years. Later Balzac advised young writers to correspond with people, for "letter writing forms one's style."

After a visit to George Sand at Nohant, Balzac told Madame Hanska about it. Previously Balzac could not bear George Sand—her masculinity riled him, and she had deserted his friend Sandeau (from whom she took her pen name). But she was the sort of woman who drew men to her and removed all their prejudices against her by the intensity of her feelings, her sympathy, her intelligence, and her brilliant conversation. When Balzac saw her at Nohant, he too succumbed:

"She . . . plays the princess a little too much . . ."

Frapesle, March 2, 1838

CARA CONTESSINA:

I am here, without having done a single thing that is worth anything. I am a little better, that is all. I have been ill of a malady that love abhors, caused by the quality of the drinking water, which contained calcareous deposits. Hence, complete dissolution of my brain forces. Poor human beings! See on what fame depends, and the creations of thought! Madame Carraud thinks I have escaped an illness; it is very sure that I have escaped making a comedy or a bad novel.

I heard that George Sand was at her country place at Nohant, a few leagues from Frapesle, so I went to pay her a visit. You will therefore have your wished-for autographs: one of George Sand, which I send you today; the other, signed Aurore Dudevant, you shall receive in my next letter. Thus you will have the curious animal under both aspects. But there is still another; the nickname, given by her friends, of "*le docteur Piffoël*". When that reaches me I will send it. As you are curious *eminetissime* or an *eminetissime* curious person, I will relate to you my visit.

I arrived at the Château de Nohant on Shrove Saturday, about half-past seven in the evening, and I found comrade George Sand in her dressing-gown, smoking a cigar after dinner in the chimney corner of an immense solitary chamber. She was wearing pretty yellow slippers trimmed with fringe, coquettish stockings, and red trousers. So much for the moral. Physically, she has doubled her chin like a monk. She has not a single white hair in spite of her dreadful troubles; her swarthy skin has not varied; her beautiful eyes are still dazzling; she has the same stupid look when she thinks, for, as I told her, after studying her, all her physiognomy is in her eye. She has been at Nohant a year, very sad, and working enormously. She leads about the same life as mine. She goes to bed at six in the morning and rises at midday; I go to bed at six in the evening and rise at midnight. But, naturally, I conformed to her habits; and for three days we talked from five o'clock, after dinner, till five next morning; so that I knew her better, and reciprocally, in those three talks, than during the four preceding years, when she came to my house at the time she loved Jules Sandeau, and was connected with Musset. She knew me only as I went to see her now and then.

It was useful for me to see her, for we made mutual confidences on the subject of Jules Sandeau. I, who am the last to blame her for that desertion, have nothing now but the deepest compassion for her, as you will have for me when you know with whom we had to do; she, in love; I, in friendship.

She was, however, even more unhappy with Musset; and she is now in deep retirement, condemning both marriage and love;

because in both states she has met with nothing but deceptions.

Her male is rare, that is the whole of it. He is the more so because she is not lovable, and, consequently, will always be difficult to love. She is a lad, she is an artist, she is grand, generous, devoted, chaste; she has the great lineaments of a man; *ergo*, she is not a woman. I did not feel, any more than I formerly felt when beside her, attacked by that gallantry of the epidermis which one ought to employ in France and Poland towards every species of woman. I talked as with a comrade. She has lofty virtues, of the kind that society takes the wrong way. We discussed, with a gravity, good faith, candour, and conscience worthy of the great shepherds who lead herds of men, the grand questions of marriage and liberty: "For," as she said to me with immense pride (I should never have dared to think it for myself), "although by our writings we are preparing a revolution for future manners and morals, I am not less struck by the objections to the one than by those to the other."

We talked a whole night on this great problem. I am altogether for the liberty of the young girl and the slavery of the wife; that is to say, I wish that before marriage she should know what she binds herself to, that she should study it all, because, when she has signed the contract and experienced its chances she must be faithful to it. I gained a great deal in making Madame Dudevant recognise the necessity of marriage; but she will believe it, I am sure, and I think I have done good in proving it to her.

She is an excellent mother, adored by her children; but she dresses her daughter Solange as a boy, which is not right. *Morally*, she is like a young man of twenty, for she is inwardly chaste and *prudish*; she is only an artist externally. She smokes immoderately; plays the princess a little too much, perhaps; and I am convinced that she has faithfully painted herself in the princess of her *Secrétaire intime*. She knows, and said, of herself just what I think, without my saying it to her, namely: that she has neither force of conception, nor gift of constructing plots, nor faculty of reaching the true, nor the art of pathos, but—without knowing the French language—she has *style*; and that is true.

She takes her fame, as I do mine, in jest, and she has a profound contempt for the public, calling it *Jumento*.

I will relate to you the immense and secret devotion of this woman for those two men, and you will say to yourself that there is nothing in common between angels and devils. All the follies that she has committed are titles to fame in the eyes of great and noble souls. She was duped by Madame Dorval, Bocage, Lamennais, etc., etc. Through the same sentiment she is now the dupe of Liszt and Madame d'Agoult; but she has just come to see it as to that pair as she did in the case of la Dorval; she has one of those minds that are powerful in the study, through intellect, and extremely easy to entrap on the domain of realities.

Apropos of Liszt and Madame d'Agoult, she gave me the subject of *Les Galériens*, or *Amours forcés*, which I am going to write, for in her position she cannot do so. Keep that secret. In short, she is a man, and all the more a man because she wants to be one, because she has come out of womanhood, and is not a woman. Woman attracts, and she repels; and, as I am very much of a man, if she produces that effect on me she must produce it on all men who are like me; she will always be unhappy. Thus, she now loves a man who is inferior to her, and in that contract there can be only deception and disenchantment for a woman with a fine soul. A woman ought always to love a man superior to herself, or else be so well deceived that it will be as if it were so.

I did not stay at Nohant with impunity; I brought away a monstrous vice; she made me smoke a hookah and latakia; and they have suddenly become a necessity to me. This transition will help me to give up coffee and vary the stimulant I need for work; I thought of you. I want a fine, good hookah, with a lid or extra bowl; and, if you are very amiable, you will get me one in Moscow; for it is there, or in Constantinople, that the best can be had. Be friendly enough to write at once to Moscow, so that the parcel may reach me with the least possible delay. But on condition only that you tell me what you want in Paris, so that I have my hookah only as barter. If you can also find true latakia in Moscow, send me five or six pounds, as opportunities are rare to

get it from Constantinople. And dare I also ask you not to forget the *caravan tea* you promised me?

I am much of a child, as you know. If it is possible that the decoration of the hookah should be in turquoise, that would please me, all the more because I want to attach to the end of the tube the knob of my cane, which I am prevented from carrying by the notoriety given to it. If you wish, I will send you a set of Parisian pearls, such as you liked; the mounting will be so artistic that, although the pearls are only Parisian, you will have a work of art. Say yes, if you love me. Yes, isn't it? . . .

I send you my tender regards, and friendly ones to M. Hanski, with all remembrances to your young companions. . . .

Think that if I pray it is for you; if I ask God for anything with that cowl lowered it is for you, and that the fat monk now before you is ever the moujik of your lofty and powerful mind.

GEORGE SAND and Balzac essentially differed as writers. In the preface of one of her books (she wrote more than one hundred), she said: ". . . Balzac, a master to whose talent I have always done homage, has written the *Comédie humaine*. But, although I was united by the ties of friendship to that illustrious man, I saw human affairs under quite a different aspect. . . . What I should like to write is the human pastoral, the human ballad, the human romance. . . . And, as we were not competing with each other, we recognised that the other was right."

When Madame Hanska's husband died, she put off marrying Balzac. Nine years later, she finally agreed. After the marriage, Balzac discovered that she was not the idol he had created through his letters; she was rather heartless, inconsiderate, and shallow-minded. In June, 1850, three months after the marriage, Victor Hugo heard reports that Balzac was seriously ill. He went to his house, and the maid answered the door, saying, "Monsieur is dying. Madame has gone to her own room." Only his old mother and his servants were with him when he died. His pallbearers were the most renowned French men of letters of the time—Hugo, Dumas, and Sainte-Beuve.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY, PURSUED BY HIS DEBTORS,
GOES INTO HIDING

[A LETTER TO WILLIAM TAIT]

IN 1807 Thomas De Quincey, who had been corresponding with Coleridge for some time, finally ran the poet to earth at Bridgewater. During the summer his admiration and pity increased to such an extent that by November he drew Coleridge's friend and publisher, Joseph Cottle, aside and offered to put £500 at the great man's disposal—if the gift could be kept anonymous. Cottle suggested that the gift be cut to £300—which must have represented a considerable portion of the patrimony De Quincey had just inherited.

The gift to Coleridge was typical of De Quincey's quixoticism in money matters. Up to 1819 he received some sort of income from his share of his father's fortune, but in that year the bank where the money was invested failed, necessitating redoubling his literary efforts to feed himself and his growing family, which at one time numbered nine. It is believed that his earnings from his writings rarely exceeded more than £150 a year, though from certain stories about the sums of money he occasionally carried on his person, it may be that his earnings should be estimated at a considerably higher figure. But whatever the amount, his utter inability to tell off a beggar or, what is worse, to tell a beggar from a fraud reduced his family's share in his income to an inadequate sum.

Yet, most of his children survived the penury of their upbringing. De Quincey was a kind and considerate father, and it does not seem likely that they ever literally starved. His eldest daughter, Margaret, was fortunately mature beyond her years when Mrs. De Quincey's death in 1837, after more than twenty generally happy years with her irresponsible husband, forced upon her the duty, which she fulfilled admirably,

of looking after her father's younger children. The task was often made extremely difficult by the caution that she and his other children had to exercise in getting in touch with De Quincey if he happened to be in hiding from his debtors. In the following letter to his publisher, William Tait, herewith reproduced for the first time, the *English Opium-Eater* unfolds the perils of the situation :

*"I have confided the secret of my new abode to
no human creature . . ."*

Thursday morning, April 25, 1838

Final P.S. 4 P.M. on Thursday.

I have just now an opportunity of
sending you a Hf. Sheet, one of the
ladies will give it to Fred.

MY DEAR SIR:

I heard with *consternation*, upon Sunday night last, that you had been applying for the corrected sheets of the final paper on Lamb—etc.

I will however leave you to judge for yourself what I *could* have done under the circumstances which I am going to state: Three separate times, in three separate lodgings, I had been traced by the emissaries of my creditors; and always through the carelessness of my children, who suffered themselves to be followed unconsciously. Well: at length I had found an asylum in the house of three most amiable and interesting young women—the daughters of a Scottish friend, now deceased, to whom I was greatly attached.—Could there be a happier situation? Better or more excellent creatures than these three sisters never existed:—their house is elegant and spacious; their servants too numerous to feel the

addition of a single inmate as any burthen; from all care, forethought, or expense, I was entirely liberated; and finally, though breakfasting and passing the day alone until 6 o'clock at night,—*after* that hour, at dinner, tea, and for as many hours of the evening as I pleased, I had the luxuries of elegant female society, polished conversation, music, and all those delicate attentions which, as you know, wherever there is kindness of heart and gentleness of manner, flow so naturally and so delightfully from female hands.—Certainly amongst this Trinity of Scottish Lasses, so innocent—so gentle—and so kind-hearted, and to me especially (as their father's friend) so almost filial in their goodness and hospitalities, I passed the very happiest month that I have known for a long, long time; happier indeed than I had believed it possible for me to experience under the circumstances which surround me.

In reality I knew, I said, that was *too* happy to last. Every morning, as I rose, I whispered to myself—This will be my last day with my young hostesses. And accordingly on Sunday last I proved to be right. That morning brought me information, past all doubting, that I had been traced:—and guess by whom: it is not pleasant to mention one's own charities; but I cannot else make you understand the shock which I received. Four months ago, or it may be more, a certain Peggy Brown—a char-woman, a washerwoman, etc. etc. in the Abbey—had been discharged from the Infirmary as cured of a fever. Cured she was, but weak and incapable of work: so at least I heard: I sent my little daughter Florence to see her; for she had formerly worked occasionally as an assistant of my servants;—and, upon Florence's report, I continued to send her what I presumed might support her for some weeks until I heard of her entire restoration to strength. This woman it is, and no other, who has driven me from my quiet sanctuary. She pursued Little Fred, by night and more than once; and in the hearing of a young woman (a servant of my family, who knew my secret and has kept it faithfully) she boasted of her discovery.

After this I knew there was no more safety for me. She, that is P.B., pretends (I understand) that she does not mean to make any hostile use of her knowledge; but that an *old* woman should have

taken the trouble to follow a light-footed child for a mile and a half, and more than once, with no view to a profitable use of her discovery, somewhat transcends my faith. On Sunday night therefore I took a sorrowful leave of my three fair young friends: and, except to *them*, I have confided the secret of my new abode to no human creature; not even to my children; for they have too little presence of mind and too little discretion.

Now then, with respect to yourself,—on that Sunday night it was I first heard of your having sent for the Proofs. But what could I do? Today I shall see one or all of my faithful confidantes: they in fact it was who, within a hour or so, obtained me my present lodging. But, until this happens, I have no means of communicating with you. I dare not send letters to the post-office through the hands of my landlady, because *that* would give her the means of tracing out my name: I dare not personally deliver them at the office—for then I should incur the risk of being seen;—or at least not for some days until one special danger, pressing at this moment, shall have blown over.—Meantime, for the sheets [six or seven] of the Autobiog. which I am now going to send you, will you be so kind as to forward the money under cover to Mrs. Francklyn, 31 Windsor Street, Edinburgh?

Ever yours,—

Very faithfully—

Thos. De Quincey

P.S. I cannot guess what you have done about the proofs. But evidently it is now too late for me to do anything or to offer anything by way of remedy.—In a day or two however, when my situation will be so far changed as to allow of my communicating with you more freely, I will write fully.

ALTHOUGH *De Quincey manfully cut down his opium dosage after his last bout with it in 1844, he never managed to handle his money like an adult. Even when all his children, excepting one daughter, had gone away to their husbands' homes or to careers, he still had difficulty*

stretching his earnings to meet the upkeep of his little cottage at Lasswade, near Edinburgh, and his rented room at 42 Lothian Street, in Edinburgh itself, where most of his literary work was done. Yet, despite his many ailments, his unwise way of living, his opium intake, and many other obstacles to good health, he lived until his seventy-fifth year.

GEORGE SAND RETURNS TO FRANCE WITH CHOPIN,
AFTER A HECTIC WINTER IN MAJORCA

[A LETTER TO FRANÇOIS ROLLINAT]

GEORGE SAND picked up where Madame de Staël left off, but with a difference: Madame de Staël was satisfied with a few lovers; George Sand was not satisfied with the most important personages of the arts in France. "There will ever be in your glory," Sainte-Beuve wrote about Madame Sand in 1835, "an early bond which binds you to hers."

When George Sand found her husband unfaithful—and a dullard—she arranged for a separation, tried to support herself by odd jobs, and became the greatest woman in French letters. Starting with Jules Sandeau, she formed and broke some of the most famous liaisons in the history of literature. After she finished with Sandeau ("My heart is a cemetery," she wrote Sainte-Beuve; "A necropolis," exclaimed Sandeau when he later heard this), she took up briefly with Prosper Mérimée. Through with him, she turned next to Alfred de Musset ("Alfred was a terrible flirt," Swinburne wrote, "and George did not behave as a perfect gentleman").

After this tempestuous affair—she was always the aggressor, treating Musset as if she were his mother or even his father—George Sand dedicated her talents to a host of lesser men. In 1837 she met Chopin at a *matinée* concert. Although he at first resisted, he soon fell victim to her. Her physical were doubtless inferior to her mental charms. Her contemporaries unanimously praise her beautiful eyes; but did her lovers all succumb to her *beaux yeux*? Her masculinity and motherly love were just what would satisfy the delicate, high-strung pianist.

When Chopin's health grew worse and her son Maurice became ill, she

I should not have minded if poor Chopin could have endured it. Maurice did not suffer at all.

The roar of the wind and the sea buffeting against our rocks was sublime. The immense deserted cloisters cracked over our heads. If I had been writing the part of *Lélia* which took place in the monastery I should have been able to make it finer and truer. But my poor friend's lungs went from bad to worse. The fine weather would not come back. A maid whom I had brought from France, who up till then had seemed resigned to doing both the cooking and the housework in consideration of high pay, began to make objections on the ground that it was too much for her. A day came, when after having done the cleaning and the cooking, I was ready to drop with fatigue, for besides my teaching and my literary work, besides the incessant attentions that my patient's condition demanded, I was horribly rheumatic myself.

In this country fireplaces are unknown, but I succeeded in having a grotesque iron stove manufactured for us at a very exorbitant price. It made our heads too hot and simply dried up our lungs. In spite of this, the damp of the monastery was such that our clothes were getting mouldy on our backs. Chopin got worse and worse and in spite of all offers of service which were made to us in the usual Spanish manner, we should not have succeeded in finding one hospitable house in the whole island.

At last we decided to set out at any cost, although Chopin had not the strength to move. We asked for one first, last, and only service, that someone would let us hire a carriage to take us all as far as Palma where we wanted to embark. This service was refused us although our *friends* all had the means of accomplishing it at their disposal; we had to manage the distance of three miles with a handcart, a *birlocho* as it is called here!

When we arrived at Palma Chopin had a terrible hæmorrhage; we embarked next day on the only steamboat, which runs to Barcelona really entirely for the transport of pigs. There was no other means of leaving this cursed country, and I may tell you that our fellow passengers were *one hundred pigs*, and their continual grunts and the smell they made completely deprived our poor invalid of

any peace or air worth breathing. He was still having fearful hæmorrhages when we arrived at Barcelona, and dragged himself along looking like a ghost. There fortunately conditions improved. The French consul and the commander of the French naval station received us with a graceful hospitality quite unknown in Spain. We were given passage on a fine naval brig, whose doctor, an excellent man, came to our patient's assistance at once and arrested the hæmorrhage of the lung in twenty-four hours. From that moment he began to recover. The consul had us taken to the inn in his own carriage. Chopin rested for a week, after which we departed to France in the same steamer that we had come over to Spain on. Just as we were leaving the inn at Barcelona the landlord tried to make us pay for the bed Chopin had slept in under the pretext that it was infected and that the police had ordered it to be burnt!

At last we arrived at Marseilles. Chopin stood the crossing very well. He is here, very weak, but going on a great deal better in every way and in the hands of Doctor Canvière, an excellent man and an excellent doctor who takes almost paternal care of him and answers for his complete recovery. So we are breathing freely once more but after how much trouble and anguish!

I did not want to write any of this until it was all over, because I did not want to sadden you: I waited until better times were at hand and better times have come at last. May God give you a life full of calm hours and hopefulness. My dear friend, I should not like to hear that you have been suffering as I have during our absence.

Good-bye. I press you to my heart. Remember me to any of your family who care about me, especially to your dear father.

Write to me here, care of Doctor Canvière, 71, rue de Rome. Chopin sends his remembrances and Maurice and Solange send kisses. They are both wonderfully well. Maurice is quite recovered.

AT NOHANT George Sand mothered Chopin back to health, and he did his best work under her influence. While he wrote music, she wrote her books. Like Balzac, she worked during the night—usually from ten in the evening until five in the morning. Whereas he drank enormous quantities of coffee, she smoked cigars and cigarettes continuously. A few years after the Majorca trip, she used her experiences for a book of travel, *Un Hiver à Majorque*.

Slowly, as before, George Sand began to lose interest in her latest lover. When he took her daughter's part in a family quarrel (Solange had married a man her mother thought worthless), she used this as a pretext for a quarrel. Chopin left in a fury, vowing never to see her again. This was precisely what she wanted. Chopin told friends that leaving her broke up his whole life. The same year of their parting, 1847, her book *Lucrezia Floriani* was published. In it she depicted Chopin as Prince Karol, a refined, supersensitive, morbid man. Her heroine Lucrezia has this to say of her love for Karol: "Love had survived disillusionment for a certain time; then came the stage of generosity, solicitude, compassion, devotion, of the motherly feeling, to put it in a word. It was a marvel that passions so foolishly conceived should have lasted so long. . . ."

Her friend Liszt, with whose liaison with the Comtesse d'Agoult (she was the mother of Cosima Liszt, later Wagner's wife) George Sand always interfered, wrote in later life: "George Sand catches her butterfly and tames it in her cage by feeding it on flowers and nectar—this is the love period. Then she sticks her pin into it when it struggles—that is the *congé* and it always comes from her. Afterwards she vivisects it, stuffs it, and adds it to her collection of heroes for novels."

EDWARD FITZGERALD MANAGES TO WRITE A LETTER WITH TWO IDEAS IN IT

[A LETTER TO FREDERIC TENNYSON]

EDWARD FITZGERALD said that his friendships were more like loves. Indeed, he was loved and admired by all who knew him. His many friendships with men and women of letters—Alfred Tennyson, Carlyle, Thackeray, Fanny Kemble, George Borrow, Bernard Barton—and his correspondence with them testify to what he called his “very lady-like partiality” for writing to them.

Thackeray, when asked by his daughter which of his old friends he cared for most, exclaimed, “Why, dear old Fitz, to be sure.” Before leaving for America, Thackeray had written him: “The greatest comfort I have in thinking about my dear old boy is the recollection of our youth when we loved each other as I do even when I write Farewell.” Carlyle, who called FitzGerald “a solitary, shy, kind-hearted” man, and was not above disdaining all his friends, always kept a warm remembrance of him. In one of his letters to him Carlyle said: “I wish you would write a little oftener; when the beneficent Daimon suggests, fail not to lend ear to him.” He was the only man, FitzGerald boasted, with whom George Borrow never quarrelled. Lord Tennyson wrote to a friend that “I had not a truer friend: he was one of the kindest of men, and I have never known one of so fine and delicate a wit”.

In his letters FitzGerald exhibits this “delicate wit”. The letters are not bravura pieces in the heroic style of letter writing, but they are charming, amusing, precisely phrased, sentimental, and very shrewd in their judgments of literature and men. One of his most engaging correspondents was Frederic Tennyson, Alfred’s brother and also a poet. When Tennyson wrote him banteringly that his letters were flighty and skipped around without presenting two real ideas, Fitz answered:

"The law of Generation must be repealed."

Boulge, Woodbridge, December 8, 1844

MY DEAR FREDERIC:

What is a poor devil to do? You tell me quite truly that my letters have not two ideas in them, and yet you tell me to write my two ideas as soon as I can. So indeed it is so far easy to write down one's two ideas, if they are not very abstruse ones; but then what the devil encouragement is it to a poor fellow to expose his nakedness so? All I can say is, to say again that if you lived in this place, you would not write so long a letter as you have done, full of capital description and all good things; though without any compliment I am sure you would write a better than I shall. But you see the original fault in me is that I choose to be in such a place as this at all; that argues certainly a talent for dullness which no situation nor intercourse of men could much improve. It is true; I really do like to sit in this doleful place with a good fire, a cat and dog on the rug, and an old woman in the kitchen. This is all my live stock. The house is yet damp as last year; and the great event of this winter is my putting up a trough round the eaves to carry off the wet. There was discussion whether the trough should be of iron or of zinc: iron dear and lasting; zinc the reverse. It was decided for iron; and accordingly iron is put up.

Why should I not live in London and see the world? you say. Why then I say as before, I don't like it. I think the dullness of country people is better than the impudence of Londoners; and the fresh cold and wet of our clay fields better than a fog that stinks *per se*: and this room of mine, clean at all events, better

than a dirty room in Charlotte St. If you, Morton, and Alfred, were more in London, I should be there more; but now there is but Spedding and Allen whom I care a straw about. I have written two notes to Alfred to ask him just to notify his existence to me; but you know he is obstinate on that point. I heard from Carlyle that he [Alfred] had passed an evening at Chelsea much to C.'s delight; who has opened the gates of his Valhalla to let Alfred in. Thackeray is at Malta, where I am told he means to winter. . . .

As I have no people to tell you of, so have I very few books, and know nothing of what is stirring in the literary world. I have read the Life of Arnold of Rugby, who was a noble fellow; and the letters of Burke, which do not add to, or detract from, what I knew and liked in him before. I am meditating to begin Thucydides one day; perhaps this winter. . . .

Old Seneca, I have no doubt, was a great humbug in deed, and his books have plenty of it in word; but he had got together a vast deal of what was not humbug from others;* and, as far as I see, the old philosophers are available now as much as two thousand years back. Perhaps you will think that is not saying much. Don't suppose I think it good philosophy in myself to keep here out of the world, and sport a gentle Epicurism; I do not; I only follow something of a natural inclination, and know not if I could do better under a more complex system. It is very smooth sailing hitherto down here. No velvet waistcoat and ever-lustrous pumps to be considered; no bon mots got up; no information necessary. There is a pipe for the parsons to smoke, and quite as much bon mots, literature, and philosophy as they care for without any trouble at all.

If we could but feed our poor! It is now the 8th of December; it has blown a most desperate East wind, all razors; a wind like one of those knives one sees at shops in London, with 365 blades all drawn and pointed; the wheat is all sown; the fallows cannot be ploughed. What are all the poor folks to do during the winter? And they persist in having the same enormous families they used

*For a sample of Seneca's thought, see p. 18.

to do; a woman came to me two days ago who had seventeen children! What farmers are to employ all these? What Landlord can find room for them? The law of Generation must be repealed. The London press does nothing but rail at us poor country folks for our cruelty. I am glad they do so; for there is much to be set right. But I want to know if the Editor of *The Times* is more attentive to his devils, their wives and families, than our squires and squiresses and parsons are to their fellow parishioners. *Punch* also assumes a tone of virtuous satire, from the mouth of Mr. Douglas Jerrold! It is easy to sit in arm-chairs at a club in Pall Mall and rail on the stupidity and brutality of those in High Suffolk.

Come, I have got more than two ideas into this sheet; but I don't know if you won't dislike them worse than mere nothing. But I was determined to fill my letter. Yes, you are to know that I slept at Woodbridge last night, went to church there this morning, where every one sat with a purple nose, and heard a dismal well-meant sermon; and the organ blew us out with one grand idea at all events, one of old Handel's Coronation Anthems; that I dined early, also in Woodbridge; and walked up here with a tremendous East wind blowing sleet in my face from over the German Sea, that I found your letter when I entered my room; and reading it through, determined to spin you off a sheet incontinently, and lo! here it is! Now or never! I shall now have my tea in, and read over your letter again while at it. You are quite right in saying that Gravesend excursions with you do me good. When did I doubt it? I remember them with great pleasure; few of my travels so much so. I like a short journey in good company; and I like you all the better for your Englishman's humours. One doesn't find such things in London; something more like it here in the country, where every one, with whatever natural stock of intellect endowed, at least grows up his own way, and flings his branches about him, not stretched on the espalier of London dinner-table company.

P.S. Next morning. Snow over the ground. We have our

wonders of inundation in Suffolk also, I can tell you. For three weeks ago such floods came, that an old woman was carried off as she was retiring from a beer house about 9 p.m., and drowned. She was probably half seas over before she left the beer house.

And three nights ago I looked out at about ten o'clock at night, before going to bed. It seemed perfectly still; frosty, and the stars shiny bright. I heard a continuous moaning sound, which I knew to be, not that of an infant exposed, or female ravished, but of the sea, more than ten miles off! What little wind there was carried to us the murmurs of the waves circulating round these coasts so far over a flat country. But people here think that this sound so heard is not from the waves that break, but a kind of prophetic voice from the body of the sea itself announcing great gales. Sure enough we have got them, however heralded. Now I say that all this shows that we in this Suffolk are not so completely given over to prose and turnips as some would have us. I always said that being near the sea, and being able to catch a glimpse of it from the tops of hills and of houses, redeemed Suffolk from dullness; and at all events that our turnip fields, dull in themselves, were at least set all round with an undeniably poetic element. And so I see Arnold says; he enumerates five inland counties as the only parts of England for which nothing could be said in praise. Not that I agree with him there neither; I cannot allow the valley of the Ouse about which some of my pleasantest recollections hang to be without its great charm. W. Browne, whom you despised, is married, and I shall see but little of him for the future. I have laid by my rod and line by the willows of the Ouse for ever. "He is married and cannot come." This change is the true meaning of those verses,

*Friend after friend departs;
Who has not lost a friend?*

and so on. If I were conscious of being steadfast and good humoured enough, I would marry tomorrow. But a humourist is best by himself.

THE only serious enemy FitzGerald ever acquired was after his death—Robert Browning. When, in 1889, William Aldis Wright published *The Life and Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, Browning read a reference to his wife, Elizabeth Barrett, and instantly dashed off a sonnet, poor both in taste and as poetry. FitzGerald had written a friend: “Mrs. Browning’s death is rather a relief to me, I must say. No more *Aurora Leighs*, thank God! A woman of real genius, I know; but what is the upshot of it all? . . .” The last part of Browning’s sonnet, which he published in the *Athenaeum*, ran:

*Ay, dead! and were yourself alive, good Fitz,
How to return you thanks would task my wits:
Kicking you seems the lot of common curs—
While more appropriate greeting lends you grace:
Surely to spit there glorifies your face—
Spitting—from lips once sanctified by Hers.*

As Hugh Kingsmill points out, in *More Invective*, it might have been more excusable if written in white heat of indignation. But, as he shows, Browning deliberated on it, wondering if Alfred Tennyson might object and break relations with him. Then, too, FitzGerald had been dead six years, unable to defend himself; besides, letters are personal and not—except in certain cases—for other people’s eyes.

HEINRICH HEINE WRITES THE OBITUARY OF THE ROMANTICISM OF HIS AGE

[A LETTER TO K. A. VARNHAGEN VON ENSE]

THERE have been at least three thousand settings of Heinrich Heine's poems: Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Rubinstein, Brahms, and Franz have made songs of his lyrics. Heine himself, however, had no taste for music and could not even dance. Of *Du bist wie eine Blume* there are almost two hundred different settings. Everyone knows *Die Lorelei* and Schumann's *Two Grenadiers*.

Heine valued himself not for his poetry: "I know not if I deserve that a laurel wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame; and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a sword; for I was a brave soldier in the war of liberation of humanity." A strange combination of aristocrat and revolutionary, Heine indeed helped to throw off the fetters of confinement. In Paris he writes: "God knows I am no Republican. I know that when the Republicans are victorious, they will cut off my head . . . a piece of foolishness for which I am quite ready to forgive them." Both Matthew Arnold and Georg Brandes see Heine as the logical descendant of Byron. Like Byron, he has fallen into desuetude.

Though born in Germany, Heine naturally rebelled at the rising Prussian spirit. Born a Jew, he was baptized not because he believed in the precepts of Christianity but because only members of the church could be appointed to university positions, and Heine longed to end his dependence upon his rich uncle. The Jewish faith, he declared, "is not a religion at all, but a misfortune." With the July Revolution, he knew he had to break with his native country. "What demon," he

exclaimed, "drove me to write my *Reisebilder*, to edit a newspaper, to plague myself with our time and its interests, to try and shake the poor German Hodge out of his thousand years' sleep in his hole? . . . I must have rest; but where am I to find a resting place? In Germany I can no longer stay." As for England: "I might settle in England, if it were not that I should find there two things, coal smoke and Englishmen; I cannot abide either." And so to Paris.

In Paris he found his milieu and was happy. Many years later, when his health failed, he wrote to his friend Varnhagen von Ense that he saw romanticism dying. (He was a bit premature.) Varnhagen von Ense, ever his advisor and friend, was the first to praise Heine's poems. Heine was often of the circle of intellectuals that met in Varnhagen von Ense's Berlin home. He had once written to a friend of Heine: "He requires to be preserved in a good spiritual atmosphere, for there is something about him that spoils easily." It was natural that Heine should write to this friend:

" . . . I myself was its last fairy king . . . "

Paris, January 3, 1846

THIS is the first letter I have written in the New Year, and I begin it with my very best wishes. May you be blessed with bodily and mental health this year! I am very sorry indeed to hear that you are often weighed down with physical suffering. I should have given you words of comfort, but Hecuba is a poor comforter. I have been in a very bad way lately, and writing reminds me continually of my lasting misfortune. I can scarcely see my own writing, for I have one eye closed, and one already closing, and every letter is agony to me. I do gladly seize this opportunity, therefore, of giving you news of myself by the mouth of a friend, and as this friend is familiar with all my troubles he will be able

to tell you circumstantially how horribly I have been tricked by my kith and kin, and what can be done for me in that respect. My friend, Herr Lassalle, who brings you this letter, is a young man of the most distinguished intellectual gifts; he has the soundest learning, the widest knowledge, the greatest perception that I have ever encountered; he combines the most splendid imaginative quality with an energy of will and a skill in affairs which simply astound me, and if his sympathy for me does not perish, I expect very active assistance from him. In any case I have been very glad to know such a combination of knowledge and capacity, of talent and character, and you will certainly, in the many-sidedness of your critical faculty, give him full justice.

Herr Lassalle is so distinctively a child of these modern days, which refuse to take any account of that renunciation and modesty with which in our day we dawdled and twaddled more or less hypocritically. The new generation wishes to enjoy and to make good in the visible; we old fellows used to bow down humbly before the invisible, and aspire to the kisses of shadows and the scent of blue flowers, and renounce and blubber, and yet we were happier than those hard gladiators who went so proudly to meet death in combat. The thousand years' dominion of romance is at an end, and I myself was its last fairy king, and I was deposed. If I had not hurled the crown from my head, and donned the smock, they would have beheaded me summarily. Four years ago, before I turned apostate, I still had a longing to play about with my old dream comrades in the moonlight—and I wrote *Atta Troll*, the swan song of the dying period, and I dedicated it to you. It was your due, for you were my chosen brother in arms in play and in earnest. Like me you have helped to bury the old times, and have acted as wet nurse to the new—aye, we have brought them up and are afraid—we are like the poor hen who has hatched a duck's eggs, and is horrified to see her young brood plunge into water and swim comfortably.

You see, my dear friend, how vague and uncertain I am. This weakling mood has its roots in my illness; if the paralysis, which cramps my chest like an iron band, disappears, my old energy will

come forth again. But I fear that the trouble will last a long time. The treachery which was practised against me in the bosom of my family, when I was unarmed and trusting, came upon me like a flash of lightning from a clear sky, and injured me almost fatally. Whoever considers the circumstances will see in it a murderous assault: sneaking mediocrity which, consumed with envy of genius, waited for twenty long years, had at length attained its hour of victory. It is an old story, which is forever repeating itself.

I am very ill in body, but my soul has suffered little; a weary flower, it has bent its head a little, but it is not withered, and it is rooted firmly in truth and love.

And now good-bye, dear Varnhagen: my friend will tell you how much and how unceasingly I think of you, as you will the more easily understand when I tell you that I cannot read now, and in the long winter evenings can only find cheer in my memories.

HEINE'S paralysis became worse. Soon he could not leave his bed. But he kept his sparkling wit, his shrewd sense of satire, and his beauty of poetic expression. His body was wasted, he could not read, he could not move—yet he lived on until 1856. "Can it be," he cried, "that I still actually exist? My body is so shrunk that there is hardly anything of me left but my voice, and my bed makes me think of the melodious grave of the enchanter Merlin, which is in the forest of Broceliand in Brittany, under high oaks whose tops shine like green flames to heaven. Ah, I envy those trees, brother Merlin, and their fresh waving! for over my mattress-grave here in Paris no green leaves rustle; and early and late I hear nothing but the rattle of carriages, hammering, scolding, and the jingle of the piano. A grave without rest, death without the privileges of the departed, who have no longer any need to spend money, or to write letters, or to compose books. What a melancholy situation!"

But his humour stayed with him. When his doctor asked him if he could whistle (*siffler* means both "to whistle" and "to hiss"), Heine replied, "Alas! not even a comedy of Monsieur Scribe!" (Scribe was a

prolific, craftsmanlike playwright almost totally devoid of inspiration.) Before he died he read every medical book he could about spinal ailments. "But," he said, "what good this reading is to do me, I don't know, except that it will qualify me to give lectures in heaven on the ignorance of doctors on earth about diseases of the spinal marrow." When he died, he was buried at Paris, for he had forbidden the removal of his body to Germany.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, IN A SPIRIT OF RESIGNATION,
TELLS OF THE DEATH OF HER SISTER EMILY

[A LETTER TO ELLEN NUSSEY]

THE Bells are not a famous poem by Poe but an even more famous trio of writers—Currer, Ellis, and Acton—better known as Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë. Talented, secluded, provincial, school-marmish, they enriched the English novel with at least two gems—Jane Eyre by Charlotte and Wuthering Heights by Emily.

Emily has been called the most gifted of the sisters, for besides her novel she has left poetry, much of it beautiful and all showing great talent and promise. Wuthering Heights may be said to be autobiographical—if that term includes the history of the mind. But it was not the first venture of the Brontës. First came a book of Poems written by all three, which sold only two copies. Then came Wuthering Heights and Agnes Gray, Anne's first novel. Neither of them had the immediate sale that Jane Eyre had; in fact, it was Charlotte who carried them on the crest of her popularity.

Critical acclaim for Emily's novel came only after her death. This strange book of romance came from a young woman who knew no love, who had not even a friend. Its backgrounds, however, came from the countryside Emily had known intimately and loved. "My sister Emily loved the moors," Charlotte wrote. "Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her—out of a sullen hollow in a livid hill-side, her mind could make an Eden." The scene, Rossetti pronounced years later, was laid in hell.

Death had been a frequent caller at the Brontës'. First, their mother died; four years later both their eldest sisters followed her. In 1848 their brother Patrick Branwell, a ne'er-do-well who took opium, became a drunkard, and claimed that he wrote part of Wuthering Heights, be-

came a consumptive and died, as he vowed, on his feet. "My poor father," Charlotte related, "naturally thought more of his only son than of his daughters." Soon Emily began to fade. Until the very day she died, she kept at her work, refusing to see a doctor, valiantly fighting against her illness. For had she not written a poem beginning "No coward soul is mine"? But the struggle was useless: she lived only three months after her brother's death. After Emily's funeral, Charlotte Brontë wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey, who also knew Emily, how she felt:

*"No need now to tremble for the hard frost and
the keen wind."*

December 21, 1848

MY DEAR ELLEN:

Emily suffers no more from pain or weakness now. She never will suffer more in this world. She is gone, after a hard, short conflict. She died on *Tuesday*, the very day I wrote to you. I thought it very possible she might be with us still for weeks; and a few hours afterwards, she was in eternity. Yes, there is no Emily in time or on earth now. Yesterday we put her poor, wasted, mortal frame quietly under the church pavement. We are very calm at present. Why should be we otherwise? The anguish of seeing her suffer is over; the spectacle of the pains of death is gone by; the funeral day is past. We feel she is at peace. No need now to tremble for the hard frost and the keen wind. Emily does not feel them. She died in a time of promise. We saw her taken from life in its prime. But it is God's will, and the place where she is gone is better than she has left. . . .

CHARLOTTE BRONTË brooded on her sister who, in her own words, was "torn, unconscious, panting, reluctant, though resolute, out of a happy life." Five months later Anne followed Emily to the grave. Within eight months Charlotte had lost her brother and both sisters. "To sit in a lonely room—the clock ticking loud through a still house—and have open before the mind's eye the record of last year, with its shocks, sufferings, losses—is a trial," Charlotte confided to her friend.

Charlotte, however, had more years to live. Her next novel, *Shirley*, was a portrait of Emily. When a friend of hers reviewed the book condescendingly, as being written by a "female", Charlotte sent a one-sentence letter of witty rebuke: "I can be on my guard against my enemies, but God deliver me from my friends!"

In 1854 Charlotte accepted a proposal of marriage and wed in June. In less than a year, having published her last novel, *Villette*, she too was dead of consumption. Not one of the Brontës lived to forty.

GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI, CONTEMPTUOUS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN, YET WRITES HOPEFULLY OF ITALIAN LIBERATION TO HIS HEROIC WIFE

ANITA RIBERAS and Garibaldi met for the first time in Brazil. "We both remained enraptured and silent, gazing on one another like two people who meet not for the first time, and seek in each other's faces something which makes it easier to recall the forgotten past," Garibaldi wrote in his memoirs. Compelled to flee Italy for helping Mazzini, he led the rebellious factions fighting for freedom in Brazil. Anita Riberas was a Brazilian, tall, dark, valiant, brave—an Amazon. Her father had betrothed her to a young man of his choosing, but as soon as she and Garibaldi came together every other obligation disappeared. Under cover of night, in his own ship and protected by his own guns and companions, he carried her off.

A good horsewoman, she rode and fought at his side, braved dangers with him, and bore her children in the wilderness. She was once captured by the Brazilians in a fierce battle. Fearing her husband dead, she gained permission to search the battlefield for his body. She turned over corpse after corpse and, not finding him, by a ruse escaped her captors and for four days rode through the tropical jungle, went without food, swam turbulent rivers, and risked hostile forces until she reached safety and joined Garibaldi. "Anita was my treasure," he wrote, "and no less zealous than myself for the sacred cause of nations."

Having heard of the new revolutionary movements afoot in Italy, Garibaldi set out for his native land and arrived there in 1848. Anita and his family soon joined him. With three thousand volunteers he began the liberation of Italy. While on the march he told his wife of his progress:

*“ . . . the Italian name has become scorn and
derision in the world.”*

Subiaco, April 19, 1849

DEAREST ANITA:

I write to inform you that I am all right and am marching with Colonna upon Anagni, which I shall probably reach to-morrow; how long I shall stay there, I cannot tell you as yet. In Anagni I shall receive the rifles and the rest of the outfit for the troops. My mind will not be at rest until I receive a letter from you, confirming that you have arrived safely in Nice. Write to me immediately, I must have news from you, my dearest Anita; let me know your impressions of the events in Genoa and Toscana. You stalwart and heroic woman! How contemptuously you must look down upon this effeminate race of Italians, upon these, my countrymen, whom I have so often tried to imbue with greatness of soul, and who do not deserve it! It is true that treachery has lamed every courageous uprising. But however that may be, we are dishonoured; the Italian name has become scorn and derision in the world. I am indignant that I belong to a family with so many cowards; but do not think that this has caused me to lose courage and to despair of the future of my country; on the contrary, I have more hope than ever. Unpunished, one can dishonour an individual, but one cannot dishonour unpunished a nation. The traitors are now known. Italy's heart still beats, and though it may not be quite whole, yet it can throw off the elements of disease, which are the cause of its malady.

The Reaction has succeeded in intimidating the people by treachery and villainy, but the people will never forget the treachery and the villainy of the Reaction! As soon as it has

recovered from its fright, it will uprise with terrible vehemence, and then destroy the coward who caused its abasement. Write to me, I beg of you once again, I must have news from you, from my mother and the children. You need not have an anxiety about me, I am in better health than ever and consider myself and my twelve hundred armed followers insuperable. Rome affords now an imposing picture. All the brave men are in its vicinity, and God will assist us! Farewell.

Your

Giuseppe

ELEVEN days later, Garibaldi won a great victory defending Rome. Though he had been wounded at the start of the struggle, he remained all day fighting in the saddle. When Rome fell, Garibaldi and his followers began the famous retreat to Venice. Chased by the French, Spanish, Austrian, and Neapolitan armies, they outwitted their enemies and fled through the hills and marshlands. Anita accompanied her husband during the retreat, caring for the wounded, cheering up the men, and riding at his side. Suddenly she became ill. She grew weaker, calling out for water, which they lacked. Finally, in the marshes of Ravenna she could not go on, and died in Garibaldi's arms.

Garibaldi was grief-stricken. "I had come upon a forbidden treasure," he wrote reminiscently, "but yet a treasure of great price. . . . Two hearts were joined in infinite love. . . . On the day when, vainly hoping to bring her back to life, I clasped the hand of a corpse, with bitter tears of despair, then I knew the evil I had wrought. I sinned greatly, but I sinned alone."

JENNY LIND MEETS WITH AN ASTONISHING RECEPTION IN NEW YORK

[A LETTER TO HER PARENTS]

JENNY LIND'S *American tour was due to the machinations of Phineas T. Barnum. While he was in London exhibiting General Tom Thumb, the Lind craze, which never utterly abated until her death, was at its height. After returning to America, the idea of importing her for a tour began to obsess him. Barnum's reasons were not æsthetic. "I had never heard her sing," he confessed, "but her reputation was enough for me." He believed that "the chances were greatly in favour of immense pecuniary success"; also, that "as my name has long been associated with 'humbug', and the American public suspect that my capacities do not extend beyond the power to exhibit a stuffed monkey skin or a dead mermaid, I can afford to lose \$50,000 in such an enterprise as bringing to this country the greatest musical wonder of the age."*

The amazing thing is that Barnum managed to lure Jenny Lind to America. She had retired from the operatic stage only the previous year—1849—apparently because the moral climate of theatrical life was rather too torrid for one so prim. In vain her friends protested that Barnum would cart her around the country in a box and exhibit her at a shilling a head. But Jenny Lind, though a good woman, was also a good business woman. She drove a hard bargain with Barnum, who had to place \$187,500 with her London bankers to cover any possible deficit.

Jenny Lind came to America and conquered:

"Here everything is done on a large scale."

Boston, September 27, 1850

MY DEAR PARENTS:

It does seem strange to be so far from home, so far from Europe! I trust these lines find you in perfectly good health. I take for granted that you have been informed long ago of my safe arrival at New York, September first.

The voyage was in every respect extremely interesting. True, eleven days on the sea is a good deal, but the sight of the ocean, under all its various aspects, was oh! so grand!—the rising and setting of the sun, moonlight, the new stars, the rainbows, the phosphorus, porpoises and seals, storm, fog, and then again a surface calm as a mirror. All these changes we could watch in turn. We had a magnificent boat, and a particularly clever, attentive, and charming captain. I was not ill in the least, but kept wonderfully well all the time. I went on deck to have a look at the storm; it was splendid! We lay deep sunk in the trough of the waves, the colossal ship floating like a tiny eggshell on the immeasurable expanse of the waters. The ship's guns were flung hither and thither, ropes as thick as my waist came sweeping in piles across the deck, the waves, as high as big houses, of the most intensely beautiful light green, dashing toward the bridge with such violence as to overthrow and injure three sailors and one of the officers. After the storm, which lasted twenty-four hours, it turned fine, and then we had all kinds of glorious sights.

I sat up, quite on the very edge of the prow, close to the old man blowing his horn (the "old man", I must add, was of wood!), with a few friends and the Captain, who made it their business to take

care of me, and I really felt elated by the superb spectacle before me.

We gave a concert (on the ocean!) for the crew, and once or twice we had a merry bit of dancing; and in this way time flew by quickly enough.

New York, as to its situation, reminds me very much of Stockholm.

I was met with quite an astonishing reception. I have already given six concerts there, in a hall with room for 1100 people; it has been crowded each time, and we shall most likely be able to give about forty to fifty concerts in New York alone.

Here everything is done on a large scale. The first ticket sold the day before yesterday in this city for to-day's concert (the first one given here) was sold for as much as—625 dollars! The tickets, you must know, were sold by auction. It is amazing what heaps of money they seem to have here.

My health is, as usual, thank God, in excellent condition; voice is fresh and strong, and I am looking forward extremely to some plan—after this "*tournee*" is over—for enjoying peace and rest; for, indeed, in these two matters, so precious to us, as human beings, I seem to be given but a very small share, to be so bothered as I am from morning to night. Still, it is touching to see such good will and kindness; people seem not to know how to do enough to show their favour and the genuine interest they take in me.

I wish I could send home to Pommern some of the lovely flowers and the splendid fruit which are continually sent to me. The peaches are delicious and grow here in great abundance. We have still warm weather and ever a divinely blue sky.

October 1st.—Time does pass! I shall now soon be thirty years of age! How happy I am to become an "ould hag"! Every day I see round me numbers of new faces—so many, in fact, that I find it a bore—but I am going to try and terminate my engagement as quickly as possible—*perhaps* in a year! When we meet I shall have heaps to tell you, which now I have no time to relate. It is already more than three months since I was taking part in

the country dances round the maypole at Pommern. It does seem so strange!

I wish I could soon hear that you both are well. Now, pray do take care of yourselves, so that "still many a green spring and many a chirping bird may gladden your soul." Rest assured that all I have said or written has been done with the truest and best intentions; and pray remember with tenderness your far-distant

Daughter

IN NINETY-FIVE concerts the gross take had been more than \$730,000, and Barnum found that art paid even better than freaks. Or so it seemed, the exorbitant profits from his travelling shows being largely in the future. In less than a year, his singer broke her contract, paying a \$32,000 forfeit to do so, but continued profitably in America for some length of time under other managers who promised her more than Barnum had paid her but apparently treated her less honestly. At any rate, after marrying her conductor, Otto Goldschmidt, in Boston, in February, 1852, Jenny Lind returned to England a very much richer woman. Most of her American profits, however, went to charity.

After the Barnum episode, Madame Lind-Goldschmidt became England's most beloved oratorio singer. She died in 1887, practically in the odour of sanctity, leaving the impression that she was, morally, somewhat Queen Victoria's superior. It is difficult to believe that she used to relieve the monotony of her American tour by playing handball with Phineas T. Barnum.

HERMAN MELVILLE, AT WORK ON *MOBY DICK*, SPILLS
OUT HIS ARTIST'S SOUL TO HIS NEIGHBOUR AND
FRIEND, NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

NO OTHER *tragedy* in American letters is comparable to that of Herman Melville, the critic Vernon Louis Parrington wrote. "From my twenty-fifth year I date my life," Melville confided to Hawthorne. From his thirty-third year critics and historians cease dating his life. After *Pierre* his genius petered out into hack-work. One of the contributing causes, according to Lewis Mumford, was the "tragedy" of his relationship with the pessimistic Hawthorne. F. O. Matthiessen, in his brilliant *American Renaissance*, sees no such tragedy, just a disappointment on Melville's part.

A romantic tale had Melville and Hawthorne caught in a thunder-storm, thus compelling them to take shelter in a cave. There, placed together by nature, they were forced to talk, and Hawthorne's reserve broke down, whereupon the two became intimate friends. Actually, the circumstances were not so melodramatic. Melville had written an essay on Hawthorne in the *Literary World*, but he had not signed it. The publisher of the periodical sent Melville's early novels to Hawthorne, who took an instant liking to them. Whereupon the publisher confessed that Melville had written the article about him. Thus, when Melville moved to Pittsfield, it is little wonder that he called on Hawthorne at near-by Lenox. The two became friends. Hawthorne was forty-six, Melville thirty.

They would talk about God, religion, the infinite. Melville would tell his racy stories about his adventures in the South Seas, pantomiming his words. Between his farming chores, he would write, spin his yarns, and go off by himself to think. "I and my chimney," he inscribed over his fireplace, "smoke together." He warned Hawthorne at the beginning that he would come over to talk, that he would write letters and drop

notes over the fence. However, Hawthorne need not answer either his conversation or his letters, he said.

In the early part of 1851 Hawthorne had completed *The House of Seven Gables*; Melville was burning himself out writing *Moby Dick*. About *The Scarlet Letter*, published the year before, Hawthorne remarked, "It is . . . positively a hell-fired story, into which I found it almost impossible to throw any cheering light." Of *Moby Dick*, Melville exclaimed about "the hell-fire in which the whole book is broiled." During that same summer, Melville sent Hawthorne one of the letters that need not be answered:

"I stand for the heart."

[Summer, 1851]

MY DEAR HAWTHORNE:

I should have been rumbling down to you in my pine-board chariot a long time ago, were it not that for some weeks past I have been more busy than you can well imagine,—out of doors,—building and patching and tinkering away in all directions. Besides, I had my crops to get in,—corn and potatoes (I hope to show you some famous ones by and by),—and many other things to attend to, all accumulating upon this one particular season. I work myself; and at night my bodily sensations are akin to those I have so often felt before, when a hired man, doing my day's work from sun to sun. But I mean to continue visiting you until you tell me that my visits are both supererogatory and superfluous.

With no son of man do I stand upon any etiquette or ceremony, except the Christian ones of charity and honesty. I am told, my fellow-man, that there is an aristocracy of the brain. Some men have boldly advocated and asserted it. Schiller seems to have done so, though I don't know much about him. At any rate, it is true that there have been those who, while earnest in behalf of political

equality, still accept the intellectual estates. And I can well perceive, I think, how a man of superior mind can, by its intense cultivation, bring himself, as it were, into a certain spontaneous aristocracy of feeling,—exceedingly nice and fastidious,—similar to that which, in an English Howard, conveys a torpedo-fish thrill at the slightest contact with a social plebeian. So, when you see or hear of my ruthless democracy on all sides, you may possibly feel a touch of a shrink, or something of that sort. It is but nature to be shy of a mortal who boldly declares that a thief in jail is as honourable a personage as Gen. George Washington. This is ludicrous. But Truth is the silliest thing under the sun. Try to get a living by Truth—and go to the Soup Societies. Heavens! Let any clergyman try to preach the Truth from its very stronghold, the pulpit, and they would ride him out of his church on his own pulpit bannister. It can hardly be doubted that all Reformers are bottomed upon the truth, more or less; and to the world at large are not reformers almost universally laughing-stocks? Why so? Truth is ridiculous to men. Thus easily in my room here do I, conceited and garrulous, revere the test of my Lord Shaftesbury.

It seems an inconsistency to assert unconditional democracy in all things, and yet confess a dislike to all mankind—in the mass. But not so.—But it's an endless sermon,—no more of it. I began by saying that the reason I have not been to Lenox is this,—in the evening I feel completely done up, as the phrase is, and incapable of the long jolting to get to your house and back. In a week or so, I go to New York, to bury myself in a third-story room, and work and slave on my *Whale* while it is driving through the press. *That* is the only way I can finish it now,—I am so pulled hither and thither by circumstances. The calm, the coolness, the silent grass-growing mood in which a man *ought* always to compose,—that, I fear, can seldom be mine. Dollars damn me; and the malicious Devil is for ever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar. My dear Sir, a presentiment is on me,—I shall at last be worn out and perish, like an old nutmeg-grater, grated to pieces by the constant attrition of the wood, that is, the nutmeg. What

I feel most moved to write, that is banned,—it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches.

I'm rather sore, perhaps, in this letter; but see my hand!—four blisters on this palm, made by hoes and hammers within the last few days. It is a rainy morning; so I am indoors, and all work suspended. I feel cheerfully disposed, and therefore I write a little bluely. Would the Gin were here! If ever, my dear Hawthorne, in the eternal times that are to come, you and I shall sit down in Paradise, in some little shady corner by ourselves; and if we shall by any means be able to smuggle a basket of champagne there (I won't believe in a Temperance Heaven), and if we shall then cross our celestial legs in the celestial grass that is forever tropical, and strike our glasses and our heads together, till both musically ring in concert,—then, O my dear fellow-mortal, how shall we pleasantly discourse of all the things manifold which now so distress us,—when all the earth shall be but a reminiscence, yea, its final dissolution an antiquity. Then shall songs be composed as when wars are over; humorous, comic songs.—“Oh, when I lived in that queer little hole called the world,” or, “Oh, when I toiled and sweated below,” or, “Oh, when I knocked and was knocked in the fight”—yes, let us look forward to such things. Let us swear that, though now we sweat, yet it is because of the dry heat which is indispensable to the nourishment of the vine which is to bear the grapes that are to give us the champagne hereafter.

But I was talking about the *Whale*. As the fishermen say, “he's in his flurry” when I left him over three weeks ago. I'm going to take him by his jaw, however, before long, and finish him up in some fashion or other. What's the use of elaborating what, in its very essence, is so short-lived as a modern book? Though I wrote the Gospels in this century, I should die in the gutter.—I talk all about myself, and this is selfishness and egotism. Granted. But how help it? I am writing to you; I know little about you, but something about myself. So I write about myself,—at least, to you. Don't trouble yourself, though, about writing; and don't

trouble yourself about visiting; and when you *do* visit, don't trouble yourself about talking. I will do all the writing and visiting and talking myself.—By the way, in the last *Dollar Magazine* I read "The Unpardonable Sin". He was a sad fellow, that Ethan Brand. I have no doubt you are by this time responsible for many a shake and tremour of the tribe of "general readers". It is a frightful poetical creed that the cultivation of the brain eats out the heart. But it's my *prose* opinion that in most cases, in those men who have fine brains and work them well, the heart extends down to hams. And though you smoke them with the fire of tribulation, yet, like veritable hams, the head only gives the richer and the better flavour. I stand for the heart. To the dogs with the head! I had rather be a fool with a heart, than Jupiter Olympus with his head. The reason the mass of men fear God, and *at bottom dislike* Him, is because they rather distrust His heart, and fancy Him all brain like a watch. (You perceive I employ a capital initial in the pronoun referring to the Deity; don't you think there is a slight dash of flunkeyism in that usage?)

Another thing. I was in New York for four-and-twenty hours the other day, and saw a portrait of N.H. And I have seen and heard many flattering (in a publisher's point of view) allusions to the *Seven Gables*. And I have seen *Tales* and *A New Volume* announced, by N.H. So upon the whole, I say to myself, this N.H. is in the ascendant. My dear Sir, they begin to patronise. All Fame is patronage. Let me be infamous: there is no patronage in *that*. What "reputation" H.M. has is horrible. Think of it! to go down to posterity is bad enough, any way; but to go down as a "man who lived among the cannibals"! When I speak of posterity, in reference to myself, I only mean the babies who will probably be born in the moment immediately ensuing upon my giving up the ghost. I shall go down to some of them, in all likelihood. *Typee* will be given to them, perhaps, with their gingerbread.

I have come to regard this matter of Fame as the most transparent of all vanities. I read Solomon more and more, and every time see deeper and deeper and unspeakable meanings in him. I

did not think of Fame, a year ago, as I do now. My development has been all within a few years past. I am like one of those seeds taken out of the Egyptian Pyramids, which, after being three thousand years a seed and nothing but a seed, being planted in English soil, it developed itself, grew to greenness, and then fell to mould. So I. Until I was twenty-five, I had no development at all. From my twenty-fifth year I date my life. Three weeks have scarcely passed, at any time between then and now, that I have not unfolded within myself. But I feel that I am now come to the inmost leaf of the bulb, and that shortly the flower must fall to the mould. It seems to me now that Solomon was the truest man who ever spoke, and yet that he a little *managed* the truth with a view to popular conservatism; or else there have been many corruptions and interpolations of the text—In reading some of Goethe's sayings, so worshipped by his votaries, I came across this, "*Live in the all*". That is to say, your separate identity is but a wretched one,—good; but get out of yourself, spread and expand yourself, and bring to yourself the tinglings of life that are felt in the flowers and the woods, that are felt in the planets Saturn and Venus, and the Fixed Stars. What nonsense! Here is a fellow with a raging toothache. "My dear boy," Goethe says to him, "you are sorely afflicted with that tooth; but you must *live in the all*, and then you will be happy!" As with all great genius, there is an immense deal of flummery in Goethe, and in proportion to my own contact with him, a monstrous deal of it in me.

H. Melville

P.S. "Amen!" saith Hawthorne.

N.B. This "all" feeling, though, there is some truth in. You must often have felt it, lying on the grass on a warm summer's day. Your legs seem to send out shoots into the earth. Your hair feels like leaves upon your head. This is the *all* feeling. But what plays the mischief with the truth is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion.

P.S. You must not fail to admire my discretion in paying the postage on this letter.

MELVILLE dedicated *Moby Dick* to Hawthorne, who, according to a letter of Melville's, admired the book. The critics and the public of the day, however, did no such thing. The rather disreputable author who had lived among cannibals could not write a book worthy of critical acclaim or attention. Their complete misunderstanding of the book and their total disregard of its stirring, vigorous allegory are all but a complete mystery to modern readers. When Barrett Wendell wrote his *Literary History of America* at the beginning of the twentieth century, one line sufficed for Melville, "with his books about the South Seas, which Robert Louis Stevenson is said to have declared the best ever written. . . ." Melville's *Pierre*, published the year after *Moby Dick*, was vehemently denounced. He had inscribed it playfully to "Mt. Greylock" (Hawthorne).

In November, 1851, Hawthorne moved from Lenox, and Melville did not see him again until 1856 in England. Melville was on a vagabonding tour to the Near East, and Hawthorne was the American consul at Liverpool. Hawthorne wrote that "we soon found ourselves on pretty much our former terms of socialibility and confidence." Melville continued his writing and from 1866 to 1885 worked as a customs inspector in New York. He was forgotten, friendless, morbid, unknown. Hawthorne had said at Liverpool, "He . . . is better worthy of immortality than most of us," and Hawthorne's opinion, though concerned not with Melville's writings but with his soul, has proved true in a literary sense.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE TELLS THE STORY OF HER LIFE

[A LETTER TO MRS. FOLLEN]

“**I**S THIS the little woman who made the great war?” The little woman was Harriet Beecher Stowe, who had gone to Washington to “see the heads of departments myself, and to satisfy myself that I may refer to the Emancipation Proclamation as a reality and a substance, not a fizzle out of the little end of the horn. . . . I mean to have a talk with ‘Father Abraham’ himself”; and it was President Lincoln who greeted her thus. For if Uncle Tom’s Cabin did not cause the Civil War, it startled the conscience of the North and scorched the South.

Uncle Tom (“The book insisted upon getting itself into being, and would take no denial,” said Mrs. Stowe), published in 1852, sold ten thousand copies within a week, three hundred thousand in a year, swept over England and the Continent—it has been translated into thirty-seven languages—where it was reviewed by Macaulay, George Sand, and Heine. And it was George Sand who ended her review: “Honour and respect to you, Mrs. Stowe! Some day your recompense, which is already recorded in heaven, will come also in this world.”

The South hurled other words:

Not such with Stowe, the wish or power to please,
She finds no joy in gentle deeds like these [Florence Nightingale’s];
A moral scavenger, with greedy eye,
In social ills her coarser labours lie;
On fields where vice eludes the light of day,
She hunts up crimes as beagles hunt their prey;
Gleans every dirty nook—the felon’s jail,

*And hangman's mem'ry, for detraction's tale,
Snuffs up pollution with a pious air,
Collects a rumour here, a slander there;
With hatred's ardor gathers Newgate spoils,
And trades for gold the garbage of her toils.*

—William J. Grayson, *The Hireling and the Slave*, 1856

In 1853, while preparing a Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin—containing documents, facts, first-hand accounts—Mrs. Stowe received a letter from Mrs. Follen, in London, asking about her life, to which she replied:

“This horror . . . lies like lead on my heart . . .”

Andover, February 16 [1853]

MY DEAR MADAM:

I hasten to reply to your letter, to me the more interesting that I have long been acquainted with you, and during all the nursery part of my life made daily use of your poems for children.

I used to think sometimes in those days that I would write to you, and tell you how much I was obliged to you for the pleasure which they gave us all.

So you want to know something about what sort of a woman I am! Well, if this is any object, you shall have statistics free of charge. To begin, then, I am a little bit of a woman,—some-what more than forty, about as thin and dry as a pinch of snuff; never very much to look at in my best days, and looking like a used-up article now.

I was married when I was twenty-five years old to a man rich in Greek and Hebrew, Latin and Arabic, and, alas! rich in nothing else. When I went to housekeeping, my entire stock of china for parlor and kitchen was bought for eleven dollars. That lasted very well for two years, till my brother was married and brought

his bride to visit me. I then found, on review, that I had neither plates nor tea-cups to set a table for my father's family; wherefore I thought it best to reinforce the establishment by getting me a tea-set that cost ten dollars more, and this, I believe, formed my whole stock-in-trade for some years.

But then I was abundantly enriched with wealth of another sort.

I had two little curly-headed twin daughters to begin with, and my stock in this line was gradually increased, till I have been the mother of seven children, the most beautiful and the most loved of whom lies buried near my Cincinnati residence. It was at his dying bed and at his grave that I learned what a poor slave mother may feel when her child is torn away from her. In those depths of sorrow which seemed to me immeasurable, it was my only prayer to God that such anguish might not be suffered in vain. There were circumstances about his death of such peculiar bitterness, of what seemed almost cruel suffering, that I felt that I could never be consoled for it unless this crushing of my own heart might enable me to work out some great good to others. . . .

I allude to this here because I have often felt that much that is in that book ("Uncle Tom") had its root in the awful scenes and bitter sorrows of that summer. It has left now, I trust, no trace on my mind except a deep compassion for the sorrowful, especially for mothers who are separated from their children. During long years of struggling with poverty and sickness, and a hot, debilitating climate, my children grew up around me. The nursery and the kitchen were my principal fields of labor. Some of my friends, pitying my trials, copied and sent a number of little sketches from my pen to certain liberally paying "Annuals" with my name. With the first money that I earned in this way I bought a feather-bed! for as I had married into poverty and without a dowry, and as my husband had only a large library of books and a great deal of learning, the bed and pillows were thought the most profitable investment. After this I thought that I had discovered the philosopher's stone. So when a new carpet or mattress was going to be needed, or when, at the close of the year it began to be evident that my family accounts, like poor Dora's

"wouldn't add up", then I used to say to my faithful friend and factotum Anna, who shared all my joys and sorrows, "Now, if you will keep the babies and attend to the things in the house for one day, I'll write a piece, and then we shall be out of the scrape." So I became an author,—very modest at first, I do assure you, and remonstrating very seriously with the friends who had thought it best to put my name to the pieces by way of getting up a reputation; and if you ever see a woodcut of me, with an immoderately long nose, on the cover of all the U. S. Almanacs, I wish you to take notice that I have been forced into it contrary to my natural modesty by the imperative solicitations of my dear five thousand friends and the public generally. One thing I must say with regard to my life at the West, which you will understand better than many English women could.

I lived two miles from the city of Cincinnati, in the country, and domestic service, not always you know to be found in the city, is next to an impossibility to obtain in the country, even by those who are willing to give the highest wages; so what was to be expected for poor me, who had very little of this world's goods to offer?

Had it not been for my inseparable friend Anna, a noble-hearted English girl, who landed on our shores in destitution and sorrow, and clave to me as Ruth to Naomi, I had never lived through all the trials which this uncertainty and want of domestic service imposed on both; you may imagine, therefore, how glad I was when, our seminary property being divided out into small lots which were rented at a low price, a number of poor families settled in our vicinity, from whom we could occasionally obtain domestic service. About a dozen families of liberated slaves were among the number, and they became my favourite resort in cases of emergency. If anybody wishes to have a black face look handsome, let them be left, as I have been, in feeble health in oppressive hot weather, with a sick baby in arms, and two or three other little ones in the nursery, and not a servant in the whole house to do a single turn. Then, if they could see my good old Aunt Frankie coming with her honest, bluff, black face, her long,

strong arms, her chest as big and stout as a barrel, and her hilarious, hearty laugh, perfectly delighted to take one's washing and do it at a fair price, they would appreciate the beauty of black people.

My cook, poor Eliza Buck,—how she would stare to think of her name going to England!—was a regular epitome of slave life in herself; fat, gentle, easy, loving and lovable, always calling my very modest house and dooryard “The Place”, as if it had been a plantation with seven hundred hands on it. She had lived through the whole sad story of a Virginia-raised slave's life. In her youth she must have been a very handsome mulatto girl. Her voice was sweet, and her manners refined and agreeable. She was raised in a good family as a nurse and seamstress. When the family became embarrassed, she was suddenly sold on to a plantation in Louisiana. She has often told me how, without any warning, she was suddenly forced into a carriage, and saw her little mistress screaming and stretching her arms from the window towards her as she was driven away. She has told me of scenes on the Louisiana plantation, and she has often been out at night by stealth ministering to poor slaves who had been mangled and lacerated by the lash. Hence she was sold into Kentucky, and her last master was the father of all her children. On this point she ever maintained a delicacy and reserve that always appeared to me remarkable. She always called him her husband; and it was not till after she had lived with me some years that I discovered the real nature of the connection. I shall never forget how sorry I felt for her, nor my feelings at her humble apology, “You know, Mrs. Stowe, slave women cannot help themselves.” She had two very pretty quadroon daughters, with her beautiful hair and eyes, interesting children, whom I had instructed in the family school with my children. Time would fail to tell you all that I learned incidentally of the slave system in the history of various slaves who came into my family, and of the underground railroad which, I may say, ran through our house. But the letter is already too long.

You ask with regard to the remuneration which I have received

for my work here in America. Having been poor all my life and expecting to be poor the rest of it, the idea of making money by a book which I wrote just because I could not help it never occurred to me. It was therefore an agreeable surprise to receive ten thousand dollars as the first-fruits of three months' sale. I presume as much more is now due. . . .

I have very much at heart a design to erect in some of the Northern States a normal school for the education of coloured teachers in the United States and in Canada. I have very much wished that some permanent memorial of good to the coloured race might be created out of the proceeds of a work which promised to have so unprecedented a sale. My own share of the profits will be less than that of the publishers, either English or American; but I am willing to give largely for this purpose, and I have no doubt that the publishers, both American and English, will unite with me; for nothing tends more immediately to the emancipation of the slave than the education and elevation of the free.

I am now writing a work which will contain, perhaps, an equal amount of matter with "Uncle Tom's Cabin". It will contain all the facts and documents on which that story was founded, and an immense body of facts, reports of trials, legal documents, and testimony of people now living South, which will more than confirm every statement in "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

I must confess that till I began the examination of facts in order to write this book, much as I thought I knew before, I had not begun to measure the depth of the abyss. The law records of courts and judicial proceedings are so incredible as to fill me with amazement whenever I think of them. It seems to me that the book cannot but be felt, and, coming upon the sensibility awaked by the other, do something.

I suffer exquisitely in writing these things. It may be truly said that I write with my heart's blood. Many times in writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" I thought my health would fail utterly; but I prayed earnestly that God would help me till I got through, and still I am pressed beyond measure and above strength.

This horror, this nightmare abomination! can it be in my country! It lies like lead on my heart, it shadows my life with sorrow; the more so that I feel, as for my own brothers, for the South, and am pained by every horror I am obliged to write, as one who is forced by some awful oath to disclose in court some family disgrace. Many times I have thought that I must die, and yet I pray God that I may live to see something done. I shall in all probability be in London in May: shall I see you?

It seems to me so odd and dream-like that so many persons desire to see me, and now I cannot help thinking that they will think, when they do, that God hath chosen "the weak things of this world."

If I live till spring I shall hope to see Shakespeare's grave, and Milton's mulberry-tree, and the good land of my fathers,—old, old England! May that day come!

Yours affectionately,

H. B. Stowe

THE day came, and in the spring Mrs. Stowe set sail for England. There she made the acquaintance of Lady Byron—a friendship that had its repercussions all over England and America. For, on Lady Byron's death, Mrs. Stowe, in true Puritan fashion, defended her against the detractors who had dug up stories of Lady Byron's deleterious effect on Byron. Mrs. Stowe poured forth secrets—including Byron's incestuous affair with his sister—secrets that set up endless controversies, caused a wave of reaction against Byron and, with him, the romanticism of the age, and strengthened the nascent spirit of realism in literature.

In her last years, having written thirty books and hundreds of articles and short stories, Mrs. Stowe lost her mind. She delighted in wandering around in her garden and singing hymns, of which she knew many—her father, her brothers, her husband, her son were all preachers. To people who spoke of Uncle Tom's Cabin she said: "God wrote it. I merely did his dictation."

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, AMID THE HORRORS OF THE
CRIMEAN WAR, JOLTS ENGLAND WITH THE
FACTS

[A LETTER TO SIR WILLIAM BOWMAN]

AT THE outbreak of the Crimean War, The Times correspondent there, after reporting the horrible neglect and bad treatment of the wounded, asked: "Are there no devoted women among us able and willing to go forth to minister to the sick and suffering soldiers of the East in the hospitals of Scutari? Are none of the daughters of England, at this extreme hour of need, ready for such a work of mercy?"

Florence Nightingale, who had been working to change nursing from a menial labour to a profession for gentlewomen, answered his appeal. The same day she wrote to Sydney Herbert in the War Office, submitting her services, he wrote her: "My question simply is, would you listen to the request to go out and supervise the whole thing? You would, of course, have plenary authority over all the nurses, and I think I could secure you the fullest assistance and co-operation from the medical staff, and you would also have an unlimited power of drawing on the government for whatever you think requisite for the success of your mission."

On October 21, 1854, with thirty-eight nurses, she left England for the Crimea. She reached Scutari on November 4 and immediately set about her work. The hospitals were abominations of filth and disorder and of incompetence on the part of the medical staff. Instead of the co-operation Herbert had promised her she received threats from both the military and medical division, who resented her interference. On her feet daily for twenty hours, fighting not only death and disease but the English authorities, Florence Nightingale began her heroic task. Ten days after landing, to her friend, Sir William Bowman, a famous surgeon and anatomist, she reported the conditions under which she had to labour:

“ . . . we are steeped up to our necks in blood . . . ”

November 14, 1854

“ I CAME out, Ma’am, prepared to submit to everything, to be put upon in every way. But there are some things, Ma’am, one can’t submit to. There is the Caps, Ma’am, that suits one face, and some that suits another. And if I’d known, Ma’am, about the Caps, great as was my desire to come out to nurse at Scutari, I wouldn’t have come, Ma’am.” —*Speech of Mrs. Lawfield.*—Time must be at a discount with the man who can adjust the balance of such an important question as the above, and I for one have none: as you will easily suppose when I tell you that on Thursday last we had 1715 sick and wounded in this Hospital (among whom 120 Cholera Patients), and 650 severely wounded in the other Building called the General Hospital, of which we also have charge, when a message came to me to prepare for 510 wounded on our side of the Hospital who were arriving from the dreadful affair of the 5th November from Balaklava, in which battle were 1763 wounded and 442 killed, besides 96 officers wounded and 38 killed. I always expected to end my days as Hospital Matron, but I never expected to be Barrack Mistress. We had but half an hour’s notice before they began landing the wounded. Between one and 9 o’clock we had the mattresses stuffed, sewn up, laid down—alas! only upon matting on the floor—the men washed and put to bed, and all their wounds dressed. I wish I had time. I would write you a letter dear to a surgeon’s heart. I am as good as a *Medical Times*! But oh! you Gentlemen of England who sit at Home in all the well-earned satisfaction of your successful cases, can have little Idea from reading the newspapers of the Horror and Misery (in a Military Hospital) of operating upon these

dying, exhausted men. A London Hospital is a Garden of Flowers to it.

We have had such a Sea in the Bosphorus, and the Turks, the very men for whom we are fighting, carry in our Wounded so cruelly, that they arrive in a state of Agony. One amputated Stump died 2 hours after we received him, one compound Fracture just as we were getting him into Bed—in all, twenty-four cases died on the day of landing. The Dysentery Cases have died at the rate of one in two. Then the day of operations which follows. . . .

We are very lucky in our Medical Heads. Two of them are brutes, and four are angels—for this is a work which makes either angels or devils of men and of women too. As for the assistants, they are all Cubs, and will, while a man is breathing his last breath under the knife, lament the “annoyance of being called up from their dinners by such a fresh influx of wounded”! But unlicked Cubs grow up into good old Bears, tho’ I don’t know how; for certain it is the old Bears are good. We have now *four miles* of Beds, and not eighteen inches apart.

We have our Quarters in one Tower of the Barrack, and all this fresh influx has been laid down between us and the Main Guard, in two Corridors, with a line of Beds down each side, just room for one person to pass between, and four wards. Yet in the midst of this appalling Horror (we are steeped up to our necks in blood) there is good, and I can truly say, like St. Peter, “It is good for us to be here”—though I doubt whether if St. Peter had been here, he would have said so. As I went my night-rounds among the newly wounded that first night, there was not one murmur, not one groan, the strictest discipline—the most absolute silence and quiet prevailed—only the steps of the Sentry—and I heard one man say, “I was dreaming of my friends at Home,” and another said, “I was thinking of them.” These poor fellows bear pain and mutilation with an unshrinking heroism which is really super-human, and die, or are cut up without a complaint.

The wounded are now lying up to our very door, and we are landing 540 more from the *Andes*. I take rank in the Army as

Brigadier-General, because 40 British females, whom I have with me, are more difficult to manage than 4000 men. Let no lady come out here who is not used to fatigue and privation. . . . Every ten minutes an Orderly runs, and we have to go and cram lint into the wound till a Surgeon can be sent for, and stop the bleeding as well as we can. In all our corridor, I think we have not an average of three Limbs per man. And there are two Ships more "loading" at the Crimea with wounded—(this is our Phraseology). Then come the operations, and a melancholy, not an encouraging List is this. They are all performed in the wards—no time to move them; one poor fellow exhausted with hæmorrhage, has his leg amputated as a last hope, and dies ten minutes after the Surgeon has left him. Almost before the breath has left his body it is sewn up in its blanket, and carried away and buried the same day. We have no room for Corpses in the Wards. The Surgeons pass on to the next, an excision of the shoulder-joint, beautifully performed and going on well. Ball lodged just in the head of the joint and fracture starred all round. The next poor fellow has two Stumps for arms, and the next has lost an arm and a leg. As for the Balls they go in where they like and come out where they like and do as much harm as they can in passing. That is the only rule they have. . . .

I am getting a Screen now for the amputations, for when one poor fellow, who is to be amputated tomorrow sees his comrade today die under the knife, it makes impression and diminishes his chance. But, anyway, among these exhausted Frames, the mortality of the operations is frightful. We have Erysipelas, fever and gangrene, and the Russian wounded are the worst.

We are getting on nicely though in many ways. They were so glad to see us. The Senior Chaplain is a sensible man, which is a remarkable Providence. . . . If you ever see Mr. Whitfield, the House Apothecary of St. Thomas', will you tell him that the nurse he sent me, Mrs. Roberts, is worth her weight in gold. . . . Mrs. Drake is a Treasure. The four others are not fit to take care of themselves, but they may do better by and bye if I can convince them of the absolute necessity of discipline. We hear there was

another engagement on the 8th and more wounded, who are coming down to us. This is only the beginning of things.

BEFORE long, the hospital was in good order—clean and better equipped. Florence Nightingale did not hesitate to demand stores and supplies from Britain, to enforce routine among her nurses, and to get what she wanted. The military and medical officials called her the “Lady-in-Chief”; the soldiers, devoted to her, called her the “Lady with the Lamp”.

When the Crimean War ended, she returned to England but not to retirement. Worn out from her arduous duties in the Crimea, she nevertheless continued her struggle to bring sanitation to hospitals, homes, and countries, to help found a nurses’ training school, and to improve education. For her services during the war Queen Victoria sent her a letter of thanks and a jewelled brooch designed by the Prince Consort. Florence Nightingale, the Queen reported, was “extremely modest”.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE AGONISES OVER HIS WRETCHED WAY OF LIFE AND THWARTED AMBITIONS

[A LETTER TO HIS MOTHER]

LIKE Oscar Wilde, Baudelaire was a poseur. Unlike him, he had no sense of humour about himself, and he was a great poet. For a religion he adopted the cult of Satanism—that is, in the eyes of the public. Inwardly he was the Catholic moralist condemning himself for his evilness. He went around Paris uttering cryptic remarks about death and murder, is said to have dyed his hair green, even ate hashish, and took up with a café singer named Jeanne Duval, a dark-skinned, mediocre young woman whom he praised extravagantly.

Baudelaire had always been unreliable, a spendthrift, a man who alienated his friends. He was sent to India when he was twenty to remove him from temptations and to restore his nerves. When he came back he inherited his patrimony, which he duly squandered as quickly and elaborately as he could. As T. S. Eliot said: "He was one of those who have great strength, but strength merely to suffer. He could not escape suffering and could not transcend it, so he attracted pain to himself."

In 1857 the *Fleurs du mal* was published. Unfortunately, the French authorities discovered that it offended both state and private morals. Baudelaire, his publisher, and his printer were prosecuted and fined. The fine was never paid, but the offensive poems had to be withdrawn from any subsequent editions. Victor Hugo delighted in the poems and wrote Baudelaire that "you create a new shudder". Baudelaire translated a good part of the writings of Poe and De Quincey; these have been preferred by many critics to the originals. Baudelaire claimed that his interest in Poe resulted from Poe's having written things already existing in his own mind.

The same year as the publication of his *Fleurs du mal* Baudelaire

became reconciled with his mother. When she had remarried after his father's death, he could not forgive her for her infidelity to a memory. He quarrelled with his stepfather and reviled his mother and himself, calling his ancestors either "idiots or maniacs". At his stepfather's death they made up their differences. She repaid his debts and offered him a home in the country. He declined her offer temporarily, telling his reasons why :

"I need peace . . ."

19th February, 1858

DEAREST MOTHER:

You wrote me a charming letter three weeks ago, the only one of that kind for many years now—and I have not yet answered. You must have been painfully surprised! I want to tell you that when I read that letter, I understood that I was still loved, more than I had believed, and that many things could still be changed for the better, and that happiness might yet be granted us.

In all the different ways in which, most probably, you have tried to explain my silence, you have perhaps been unjust. The truth is that your so kind and maternal letter almost hurt me. I suffered when I realised how sincerely you wished to have me with you, when I thought that I should be obliged to grieve you since I was not yet ready.

Firstly, I do not dare to quit Paris, leaving a book behind me in process of printing [*Gordon Pym*]. You know the hideous and meticulous care I take of everything. I should be anxious and rightly so. . . .

And then think one moment of the horrible life which I am leading, which leaves me so little time for work and for the

infinite number of things which I must settle before I leave. (In the beginning of the month I had to waste almost a week, in hiding to prevent arrest, and I had left all my manuscripts unfinished at home. This is only one of the thousand vicissitudes of my life.)

It is awful to have happiness almost within one's grasp and not to be able to seize it. And to realise that not only is one going to be happy one's self, but bring happiness also to someone to whom one owes it. And then add to all that suffering, the one which perhaps you will not understand: when the nerves of a man are weakened by an infinite quantity of anxiety and suffering, the devil, in spite of all his good resolutions, glides every morning into his brain in the shape of this thought: why not rest one day more in forgetfulness of all these things? I shall tonight, at one fell swoop, accomplish all the necessary things. And then night comes and the mind reels at the quantity of things left undone; overwhelming sadness induces sterility and the next day the same old comedy is enacted with the same good faith, the same honesty, and the same confidence.

But I am sincerely longing to get away from this cursed town where I have suffered so much and where I have wasted so much time. Who knows whether in Honfleur my mind may not grow young once more in happiness and peace? I have in my mind a score of novels and two plays. I do not dream of a worthy commonplace fame; I want to overwhelm people, astound them like Byron, Balzac, or Chateaubriand. But is there still time left for that?—Ah! if I had only known when I was young the value of time, of health, and of money! And these cursed *Fleurs* that I have to do again. I need peace for that. Artificially by will power to become once more a poet, to return to a path that one had thought dug and finished, to treat once more a subject one had thought exhausted, and that merely to obey the dictates of three magistrates! Seriously, without exaggeration, I believe that at Honfleur, by hard work I can pay all my debts in two years, that is to say earn three times as much as here. What a misfortune that you did not offer me this arrangement, nearly a

year ago, when I was not yet plunged so deep in terrible difficulties. . . .

And then to return to the story of all my plans of happiness, I shall be able to read, read, and read again! without hindering my output. All my days will be spent in renovating my mind! For I must confess to you, Mother dear, that my unfortunate education has been sadly and cruelly interrupted by all my folly and all my tribulations; and youth is flying, and I think sometimes with terror of the flight of the years; they are however only made up of hours and minutes; but when one is wasting time one thinks only of the fraction of time, and not of the sum total.

Here indeed are good plans and I do not think that they are impossible to realise, since at Honfleur I shall have no excuse not to fulfil them.

As you read my letter, I do not wish you to imagine that selfishness alone prompts me. The greatest part of my thought is this: my mother does not know me, she has scarcely seen me, we have not had time to live together, we must nevertheless find a few years of happiness together. Good-bye; it is half-past four. In imagination I kiss you with all my heart. This letter is scandalously scrawled, but I have scribbled it in large letters because I imagined it would tire your eyes less.

BUT *debts began to mount, Jeanne Duval robbed and deceived him, and he took to excessive drinking and ate opium. Paralysis set in, and he was dead at the age of forty-six. Besides his translations, he had added to the Fleurs du mal, published his Poems in Prose, and written many critical essays, being one of the first to trumpet the talents of Wagner, Manet, and Delacroix.*

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT CONCOCTS A NEW SPRING
BONNET

[A LETTER TO HER SISTER ANNA]

ALL her life Louisa May Alcott slaved for her father, "the American Plato", A. Bronson Alcott. While he contented himself with holding "conversations" for so much per hour, Louisa often worked fourteen hours a day in her attic or in a Boston rooming house so that she could provide for this ineffectual, gentle transcendentalist.

One of four daughters, Louisa was raised in poverty, educated by her father's own precepts, and tutored by Thoreau. This tomboy who grew up to be almost six feet tall laid flowers at the doorstep of Emerson, the god of New England transcendentalism, who always had befriended her father and herself. However, she never really caught the transcendental fever. Perhaps it was because she, unlike her father, thought work meant more than mere thinking or chattering away all day. She sewed sheets and pillow-cases, taught in country schools, became a domestic, and wrote to keep her family together.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Louisa volunteered as a nurse, going to Washington to help the wounded. She became dangerously ill, and her father came for her and carried her off, suffering from typhoid and pneumonia, on a railroad coach to Concord. When she became better—she never regained her health and was always racked by the cold—she resumed her slavery, tired, worn out. From her letters home about the hospitals in Washington she wrote *Hospital Sketches*, which had a large sale and made her almost famous. With that success in mind she set about rewriting her first novel, *Moods*. Her spirits were high to all who saw her and all who knew her, yet melancholy always lurked in the back of her mind. Her letters to her friends and family are gay things, light, frothy, bouncing. She never lost the ability to smile at her tragedies.

To her sister Anna she wrote a charming letter about her latest hat—like most of her clothes made up of odds and ends and cast-offs. E. D. Cheney, in Louisa May Alcott: Her Life, Letters and Journals, places this letter during the rewriting of Moods, but it seems to have been written during her first draft of the novel.

“ . . . fearfully unbecoming, but pretty in itself . . . ”

[1861?]

MY LASS:

This must be a frivolous and dressy letter, because you always want to know about our clothes, and we have been at it lately. May's bonnet is a sight for gods and men. Black and white outside, with a great cockade boiling over the front to meet a red ditto surging from the interior, where a red rainbow darts across the brow, and a surf of white lace foams up on each side. I expect to hear that you and John fell flat in the dust with horror on beholding it.

My bonnet has nearly been the death of me; for, thinking some angel might make it possible for me to go to the mountains, I felt a wish for a tidy hat, after wearing an old one till it fell in tatters from my brow. Mrs. P. promised a bit of gray silk, and I built on that; for when I went for it I found my hat was founded on sand; for she let me down with a crash, saying she wanted the silk herself, and kindly offering me a flannel petticoat instead. I was in woe for a spell, having one dollar in the world, and scorning debt even for that prop of life, a "bonnet". Then I roused myself, flew to Dodge, demanded her cheapest bonnet, found one for a dollar, took it, and went home wondering if the sky would open and drop me a trimming. I am simple in my tastes, but a naked straw bonnet is a little too severely chaste even for me. Sky did not

open; so I went to the "Widow Cruise's oil bottle"—my ribbon box—which, by the way, is the eighth wonder of the world, for nothing is ever put in, yet I always find some old dud when all other hopes fail. From this salvation bin I extracted the remains of the old white ribbon (used up, as I thought, two years ago), and the bits of black lace that have adorned a long line of departed hats. Of the lace I made a dish, on which I thriftily served up bows of ribbon, like meat on toast. Inside put the lace bow, which adorns my form anywhere when needed. A white flower A.H. gave me sat airily on the brim,—fearfully unbecoming, but pretty in itself, and in keeping. Strings are yet to be evolved from chaos. I feel that they await me somewhere in the dim future. Green ones *pro tem*. hold this wonder of the age upon my gifted brow, and I survey my hat with respectful awe. I trust you will also, and see in it another great example of the power of mind over matter, and the convenience of a colossal brain in the primeval wrestle with the unruly atoms which have harassed the feminine soul ever since Eve clapped on a modest fig-leaf and did up her hair with a thorn for a hairpin.

I feel very moral today, having done a big wash alone, baked, swept the house, picked the hops, got dinner, and written a chapter in "Moods". May gets exhausted with work, though she walks six miles without a murmur.

It is dreadfully dull, and I work so that I may not "brood". Nothing stirring but the wind; nothing to see but dust; no one comes but rose-bugs; so I grub and scold at the "A." because it takes a poor fellow's tales and keeps 'em years without paying for 'em. If I think of my woes I fall into a vortex of debts, dish-pans, and despondency awful to see. So I say, "every path has its puddle," and try to play gaily with the tadpoles in *my* puddle, while I wait for the Lord to give me a lift, or some gallant Raleigh to spread his velvet cloak and fetch me over dry shod.

L.W. adds to my woe by writing of the splendours of Gorham, and says, "When tired, run right up here and find rest among these everlasting hills." All very aggravating to a young woman with one dollar, no bonnet, half a gown, and a discontented mind.

It's a mercy the mountains are everlasting, for it will be a century before *I* get there. Oh, me, such a life!

Now I've done my Jeremiad, and I will go on twanging my harp in the "willow tree".

You ask what I am writing. Well, two books half done, nine stories simmering, and stacks of fairy stories moulding on the shelf. I can't do much, as I have no time to get into a real good vortex. It unfits me for work, worries Ma to see me look pale, eat nothing, and ply by night. These extinguishers keep genius from burning as I could wish, and I give up ever hoping to do anything unless luck turns for your

Lu

ILL health and her dissatisfaction with life led Louisa to the brink of suicide, but her friend Theodore Parker talked her out of it. "Duty's faithful child", as her father called her in one of his poems, continued to waste herself away, for she was the sole support of her family. In 1867, she finally struck it rich: Little Women descended upon America. From then on she concentrated on children's stories, writing what she called "moral pap". Her fame leaped high. Publishers sought stories from her. She would reach into her flour barrel, pull out a manuscript, and send it off. The barrel contained all the stories the publishers had previously rejected.

She worked in a greater fury than ever, supplying a huge, demanding audience. When her father died in 1888, she followed him within two days. Perhaps the shock of having no one but herself to support killed her.

PAGES FROM THE
WAR BETWEEN THE STATES,
DRAWN FROM
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF
GENERAL McCLELLAN,
ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
WALT WHITMAN,
GENERAL SHERMAN,
JOHN WILKES BOOTH,
AND ROBERT E. LEE.

[A SERIES]

GENERAL GEORGE B. McCLELLAN ACCUSES THE SECRETARY OF WAR OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEFEAT

[A LETTER TO EDWARD M. STANTON]

ONE of President Lincoln's chief tasks in the "irrepressible conflict" was to find a general capable of running the Army of the Potomac—the most important of the various groups operating in the eastern theatre of the war. On July 24, 1861, the day after Bull Run, he appointed George B. McClellan, a thirty-four-year-old major-general of volunteers, to the Potomac command. "Little Mac", as his adoring legions soon learned to call him, was a West Point graduate, had fought valorously in the Mexican War, and was making a career for himself in railroading when the firing on Fort Sumter caused him to join up.

In four months McClellan turned the ragged, shiftless, and undisciplined rabble that had gone down to defeat at Bull Run into a crack fighting unit. He was a superb organiser, but he was far too cautious for the politicians. They wanted results, and finally Lincoln himself, who had begun by giving McClellan the fullest support, became unnerved by his commander's procrastination. "All quiet along the Potomac", which at first had given such a comfortable feeling to the residents of Washington, soon became a taunt at McClellan. Action became the universal demand, and before the year was up, Lincoln was saying sarcastically, "If General McClellan does not want to use the army, I would like to borrow it."

In March, 1862, Lincoln ordered McClellan to advance on Richmond. As it was decided to operate from the York peninsula, the entire Army of the Potomac—100,000 strong—was conveyed there in boats. Then began the Peninsula Campaign, one of the most controversial military movements in the history of war. According to one group of strategists, McClellan lost the chance of a quick Federal decision by his over-caution;

others say that his strategy of delay was wisely chosen. As usual, both sides are right. If Lincoln had not detached a whole corps at the last moment, McClellan might have added boldness to his other solid virtues as a commander. The President withdrew support just when McClellan needed it most.

When McClellan first reached the York peninsula, his forces were numerically superior to the Confederates about three to one. His intelligence service was always defective, and he was positively obsessed by the idea that the forces opposite him were superior or at least equal to his. When he started his advance, the ratio was balanced somewhat better, though still heavily in his favour. General Joseph E. Johnston said of his tactics that "only McClellan would have hesitated to attack." Of course, since McClellan would not attack, the Confederates did, and for the rest of the campaign McClellan was on the defensive. The fighting culminated in the bloody Seven Days' battles, which singly and totally must be charged up as a tactical defeat for McClellan, for though at the end the Confederates had lost about 19,000 to the Federals' 15,500, McClellan had lost his power of initiative.

Shortly after midnight of the second day of fighting (Gaines' Mill), it was an irate—and bewildered—young commander who sat down and penned his wrathful dispatch to Secretary of War Stanton:

"You have done your best to sacrifice this army."

Headquarters, Army of the Potomac,
Savage's Station, June 28, 1862, 12.20 a.m.

HON. E. M. STANTON, SECRETARY OF WAR:

I now know the full history of the day. On this side of the river (the right bank) we repulsed several strong attacks. On the left bank our men did all that men could do, all that

soldiers could accomplish, but they were overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers, even after I brought my last reserves into action. The loss on both sides is terrible. I believe it will prove to be the most desperate battle of the war. The sad remnants of my men behave as men. Those battalions who fought most bravely and suffered most are still in the best order. My regulars were superb, and I count upon what are left to turn another battle in company with their gallant comrades of the volunteers. Had I twenty thousand (20,000), or even ten thousand (10,000), fresh troops to use tomorrow, I could take Richmond; but I have not a man in reserve, and shall be glad to cover my retreat and save the material and *personnel* of the army.

If we have lost the day we have yet preserved our honor, and no one need blush for the Army of the Potomac. I have lost this battle because my force was too small.

I again repeat that I am not responsible for this, and I say it with the earnestness of a general who feels in his heart the loss of every brave man who has been needlessly sacrificed today. I still hope to retrieve our fortunes; but to do this the government must view the matter in the same earnest light that I do. I shall draw back to this side of the Chickahominy, and think I can withdraw all our material. Please understand that in this battle we have lost nothing but men, and those the best we have.

In addition to what I have already said, I only wish to say to the President that I think he is wrong in regarding me as ungenerous when I said that my force was too weak. I merely intimated a truth which today has been too plainly proved. If, at this instant, I could dispose of ten thousand (10,000) fresh men, I could gain the victory tomorrow.

I know that a few thousand more men would have changed this battle from a defeat to a victory. As it is, the government must not and cannot hold me responsible for the result.

I feel too earnestly tonight. I have seen too many dead and wounded comrades to feel otherwise than that the government has

MCCLELLAN TO EDWARD M. STANTON

not sustained this army. If you do not do so now the game is lost.

If I save this army now, I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you or to any other persons in Washington.

You have done your best to sacrifice this army.

G. B. McClellan